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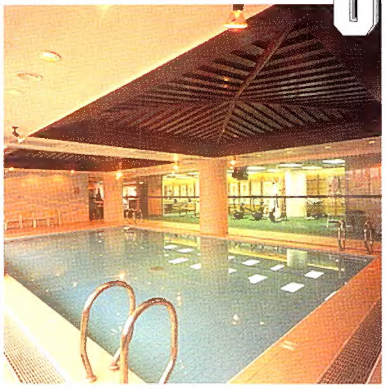

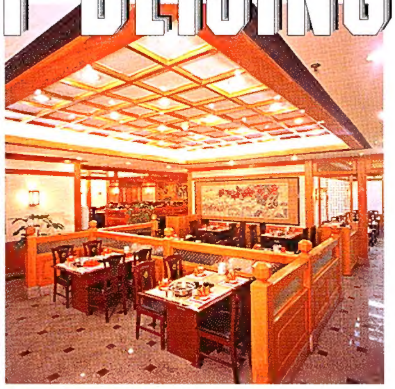

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No. 214 May 1998

HIGHLIGHTS

Dali, an Ancient Town with a Western Touch

Photos & article by Xie Guanghui

Dali in Southwest China's Yunnan Province attracts visitors with its ancient lanes and the historical handicraft of batik art. As more foreign tourists arrived, a Foreigners Street eventually took shape and has become a new attraction in an old town.

FROM THE EDITOR

Forging Ahead

PHOTOGRAPHY

Fun with Water

Photo by Wang Xuzhao

LANDSCAPES

Furong Cave: A Myriad of Sensations

Photos by Xie Guanghui *Article by Su Zhen*

Visiting Furong Cave in Jiangkou Town in the outskirts of Chongqing, one feels as if one has entered a fantastic fairy world. The various images of stalactites, waterfalls, willow branches, corals, etc., make one wonder how Nature created such miracles of beauty.

FOCUS

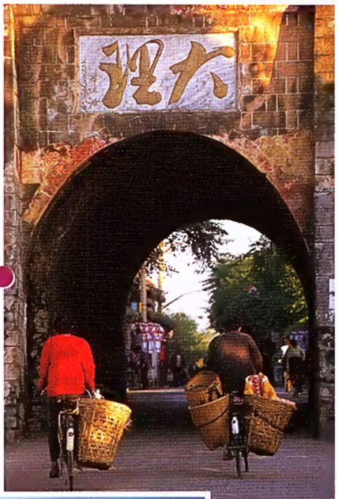
The Lotus Couple

Photos by Hua Kai *Article by Yu Gong and Hua Kai*

SPECIALITIES

A World of Painted Clay Figurines

Photos & article by Shang Xiaogang



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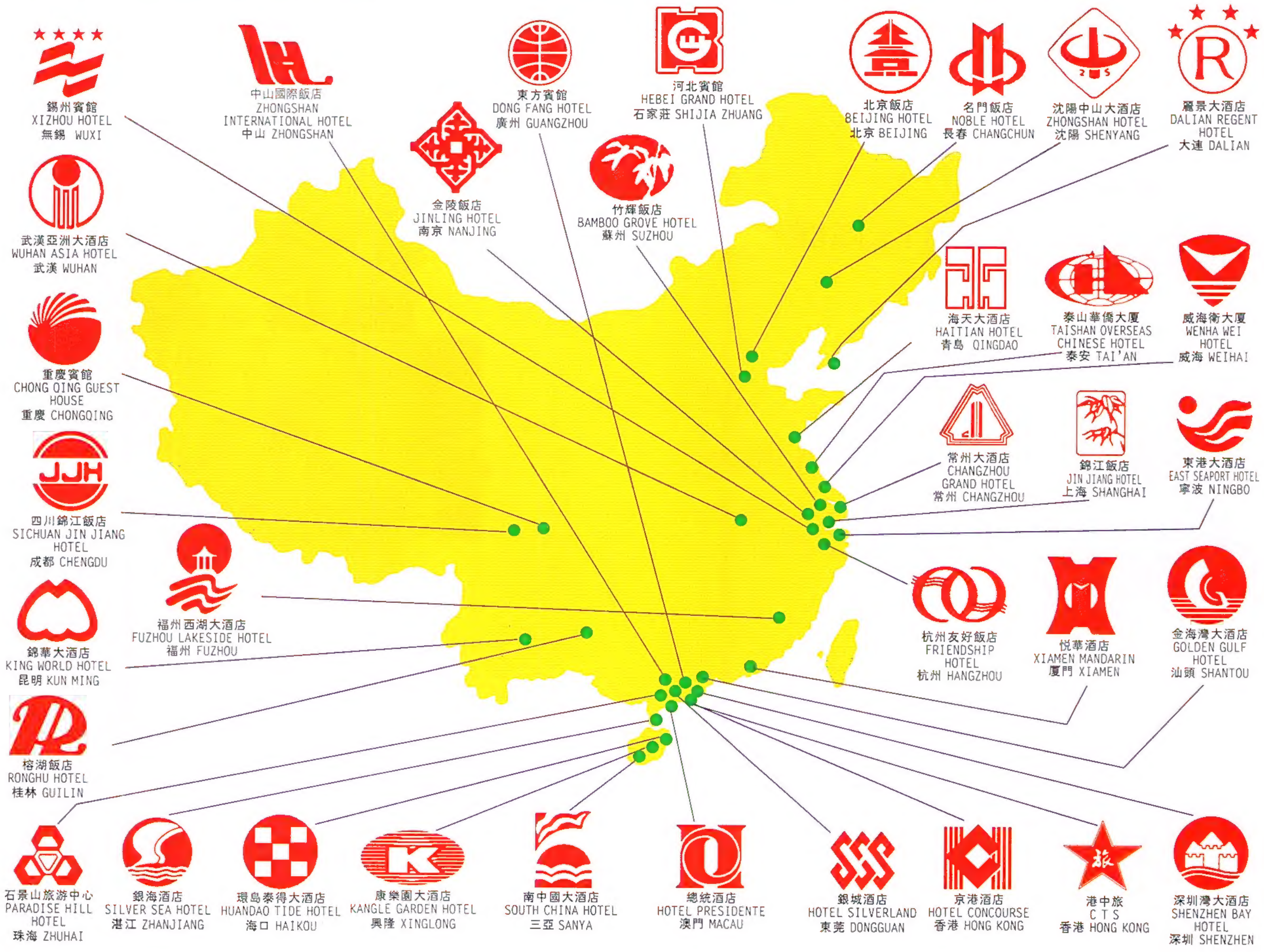
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DISCOVERIES

Adventures in the Namjagbarwa Canyon of Tibet

Photos by Hong Yang Article by Geng Quanru

Though it is the world's longest and deepest canyon, the Namjagbarwa Canyon on the Yarlung Zangbo River in Tibet is not widely known. An expedition team of eight scientists and photographers, with the help of local porters, walked through the mysterious valley, in over one and a half months. Experiencing unimaginable difficulties, they succeeded in reaching their goal and even made important geological discoveries.

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CITY PROFILE

Foshan: A Rising Star in the Pearl River Delta

Photos by Peng Zhenge and So Long Chi Article by Gloria Shang

Foshan used to be one of the four most important commercial towns in Chinese history. Today, with a skyline formed by over a hundred towering buildings, the city has become a giant producer of household appliances. But still, it offers features that many big cities do not have – it is one of the five cleanest cities in China and a model city listed by the United Nations.

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HONG KONG

Life Is Art – a Visit to Yabo Tea Garden

Photos and article by So Long Chi

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NOVELTY

In the World of 'Outlaws of the Marsh'

Photos by Xie Guanghui Article by Huang Beihong

In the outskirts of Wuxi in Jiangsu Province, by the Taihu Lake, a studio town has been built for the TV serial based on the famous Chinese classic "Outlaws of the Marsh". Visiting the town, one seems to have gone back a thousand years to the Song Dynasty. Scenes and episodes depicted in the novel are illustrated in different areas: ancient capital, county towns, the marsh base and on the lake.

Geng Quanru

Cover: Crossing Turbulent waters

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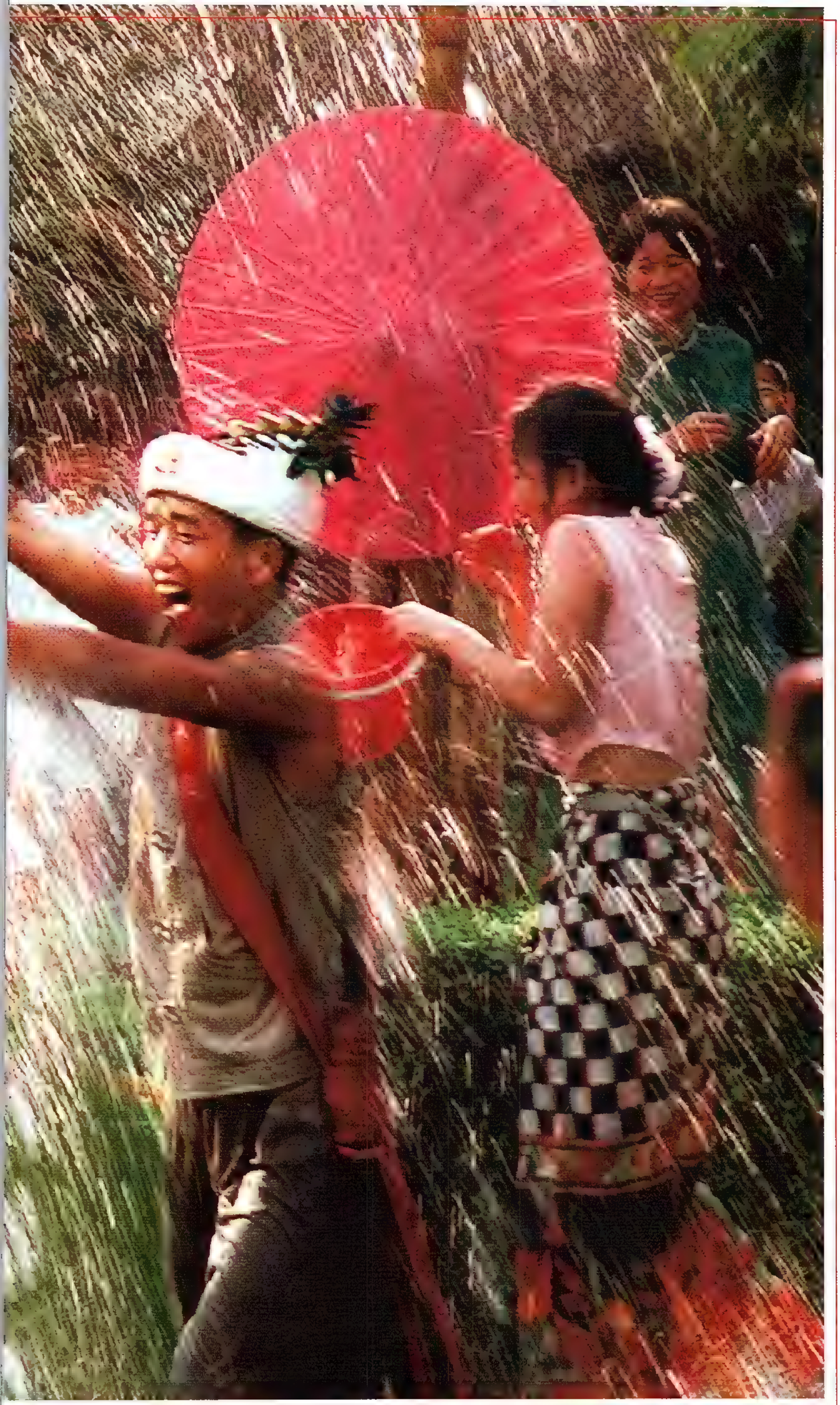

Fun with Water

Photo by Wang Xuzhao

This photograph presents us with a vivid scene. Under the bright sun, a group of colourfully dressed youths are enjoying themselves to their hearts' content by splashing each other. Some are pouring water out of buckets; others are trying to hide but are in fact gratefully drenched; some are aggressive, others are shy; still others are hesitating about joining in.... Their excitement and gaiety infect the readers deeply.

Great skills and experience are required to shoot a picture like this. First of all, the photographer must choose a safe shelter so that his camera will not be splashed; while taking the photo from a certain distance using a zoom, he or she also needs a water-proof cover to protect the camera. Second, the use of proper aperture and shutter speed is crucial – the movement should be fully expressed while the images seem to stand still. Third, it is not easy to catch a climax of activity; to a great extent, it depends on the photographer's sensibility and luck. So, to guarantee that you get a good shot, it's advisable to click your camera as many times as possible once you have such an opportunity. Finally, by using back lighting, you can avoid confusing details and make the splashes more distinctive.

This photograph confirms the successful technique of the photographer.

Estimated data:
Camera: 135, medium-long zoom;
Aperture: 8-11;
Shutter: 1/60 second;
Film: ISO 100 colour film.

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FROM THE EDITOR

Forging Ahead

The Namjagbarwa Great Canyon reported in this issue may remind you the Grand Canyon of the United States. Both are wonderful creations of Mother Nature with a rich human legacy, yet the two differ in many ways. For one thing, the US Grand Canyon has developed into a well-known tourist destination, while the Chinese Great Canyon remains primitive, and relatively unknown.

Nevertheless, among the biggest canyons in the world, Namjagbarwa Great Canyon is not only the longest – 653 kilometres – but also the deepest – 5,913 metres – and the narrowest – 21 kilometres. The gorge, cut out by the Yarlung Zangbo River, lies at the foot of the Namjagbarwa Peak, which rises 7,782 metres above sea level and is the highest peak in the eastern section of the Himalayas.

It is hard to imagine how the expedition team managed to walk through the canyon. The weather was humid; the road was tough. While crossing a bush forest, one man's feet were attacked by as many as four dozen leeches. And there were dangerous animals, insects and snakes. But the team of eight experts and photographers and 18 local porters forged ahead despite the difficulties and risks to their lives.

Their courageous efforts were well rewarded. Besides realising personal dreams, the scientists also made important geological discoveries. While reading this, we cannot help feeling grateful towards these and all other explorers. It is their spirit of forging ahead and probing things new that has pushed our human civilisation forward. Otherwise, we might never know that the globe is round, and that there is ice on the moon.

Photo by Wong Miao

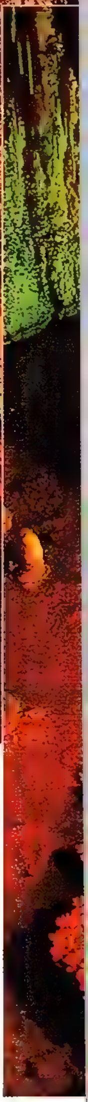
Furong (Hibiscus) Cave: a world of colours, images and mystery

One day, I visited Furong (Hibiscus) Cave. For a moment, inside the cave, with the sounds, colours, images and the concept of eternal time surrounding me all at once, an intangible impression of something more than beauty filled my dreams.

Photos by Xie Guanghui Article by Su Zhen

Furong Cave:
A Myriad of Sensations

SOUNDS



The first thing that greeted me once I set foot in the cave was the sound.
There was the trudging sound of my own footsteps.
Then there was the incessant sound of dripping of water.

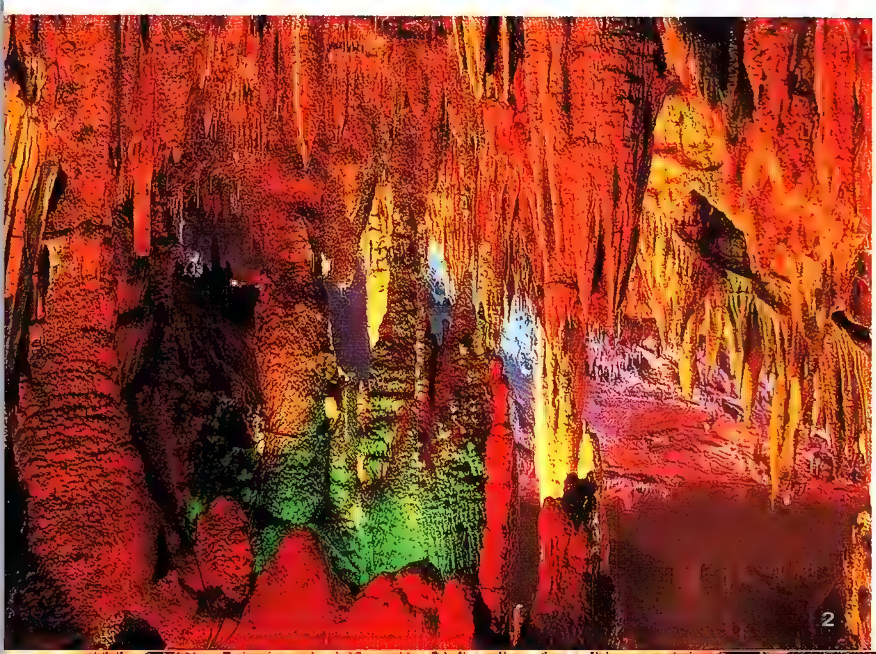
Stalactites were everywhere in the cave. Drops of water, like little worms, worked their way slowly to the tip of the stalactites. A continuous stream, the drops converged at the tiny, spiky tips of these hanging stones, one pushing the other down into the river below.

The drops, joining the rippling waters of the river, invited the image of washing clean one's mind and eliminating all worries.

The giggles of children seemed to intrude into the dripping sounds.

At the foot of a waterfall as tall as a seven-storey building, everyone exclaimed surprise and disbelief. Could this be natural? The sounds of their doubt filled the cave.

Inside the cave, the dripping, the gurgling river, the human chatter, and the echoes of all these sounds, combined gracefully into a symphony.

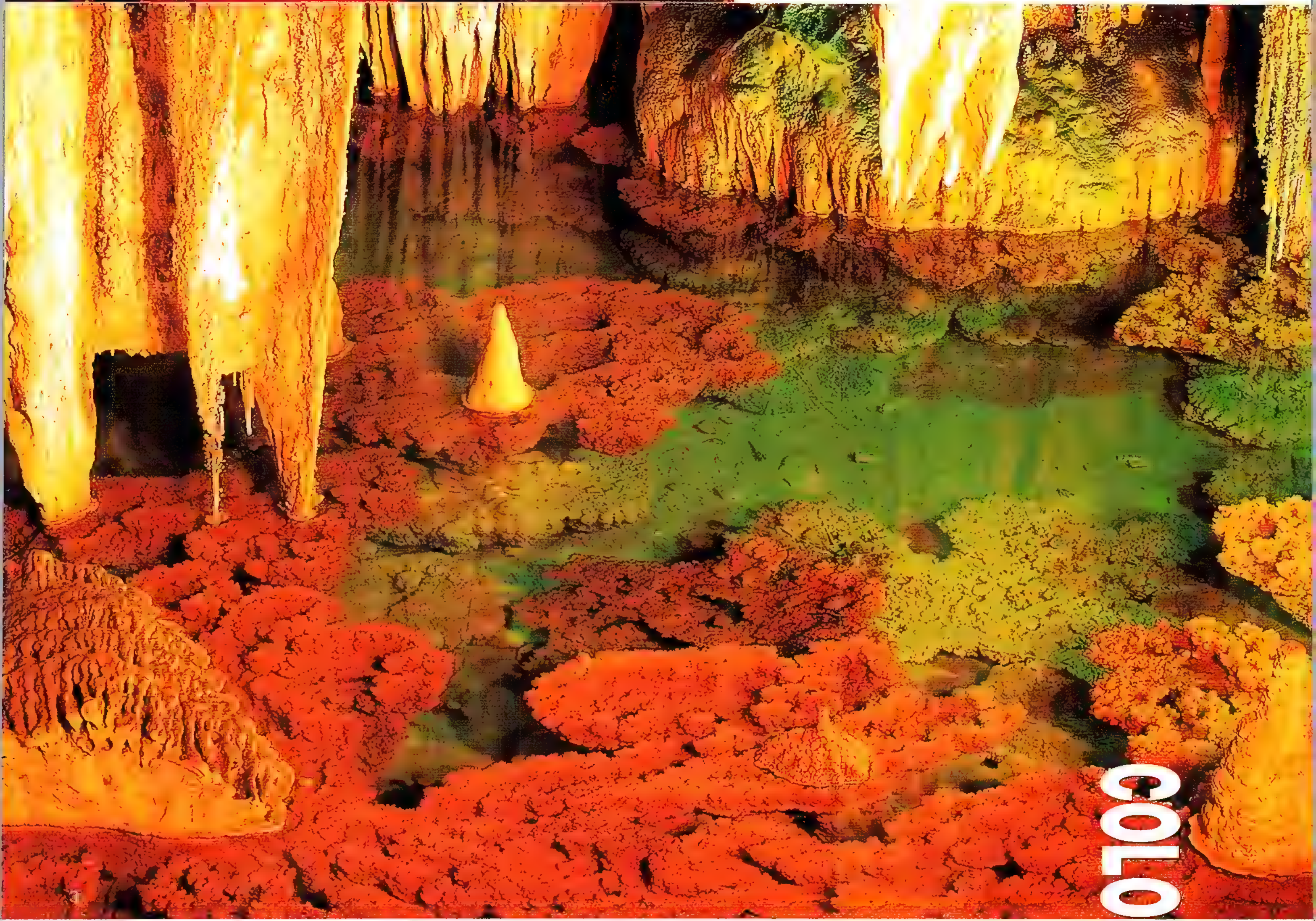


Caves deep inside the mountain are usually pitch black, but here the cave was alive in a myriad of colourful lights – red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple.

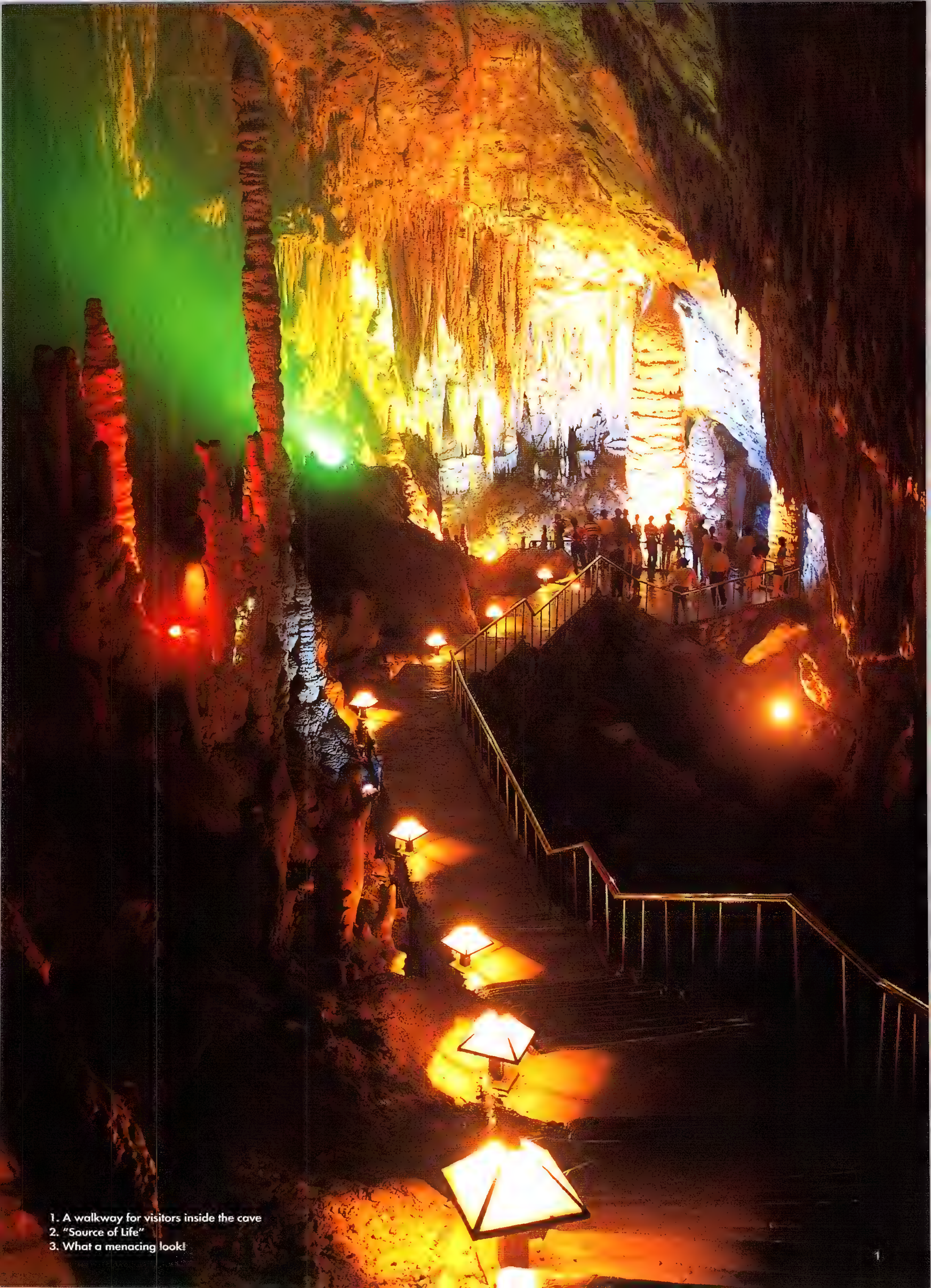
Brilliant red seemed to tinge the stalactites with warmth. Emerald green gave the "corals" their beautiful undersea glory. Golden orange made the "Source of Life" sparkle with golden rays. Light yellow shone on the stalactites, transforming them into something like wispy willow branches. Purple cast the area with a sense of mystery, while blue light increased the sensation of profound depth.

The colours unveiled the cave and at the same time enriched the images of the stalactites.

But then, the question will always remain: what is the true colour of the stalactites? Surely this karst cave has its own natural colours and beauty.



1. Light yellow stalactites evoke images of wispy willow branches.
2. Myriad colours unveil the innate beauty of the cave.
3. "Fairy Pond on the Earth"



1. A walkway for visitors inside the cave
2. "Source of Life"
3. What a menacing look!

IMAGES

2

3

Who could have thought that rock could have such an incredible variety of shapes and images?

A close look reveals intrinsic details of images pretentiously standing like needles, silk threads, stone slabs, tree leaves, snow flakes, sponges, goat horns, corals, chicken claws.... I believe no human beings could be as creative as the artist called Nature!

Stalagmites rose mightily from the cave floor to reach the ceiling, strong enough to be props for millions of years.

The "Fairy Pond on Earth" created the image of the beautiful garden of the "Queen Mother of the West" from our classic Chinese fairy tale.

The "Heavenly Wilderness" resembled terraced fields but in another glance could also look like the surface of the moon.

The wonderment lingered: how could such genuine beauty exist?

TIME

This huge stalagmite is a million years old.

There is an old saying that "it takes 10 years for a tree to grow, but it takes a hundred years for a new generation of people to succeed the old". The civilisation of humans covers no more than five thousand years. But stalactites stretch their life span to 10,000, or 100,000 or 100 million years. Water drips and stalactites grow incessantly, enlarging bit by bit, to eventually become stalagmites. A perplexing question without answer occurs to me: how old is Hibiscus Cave?

Small holes pitted in the rock are living testimony to the stamina of dripping water.

During a million years of stalactite growth, how many earth-shattering events have happened? Inside the cave, what truths does a silent, toppled stalagmite hold?

Stepping out of the cave, I knew the water would continue dripping and the stalactites would continue growing.

Translated by F. Huang

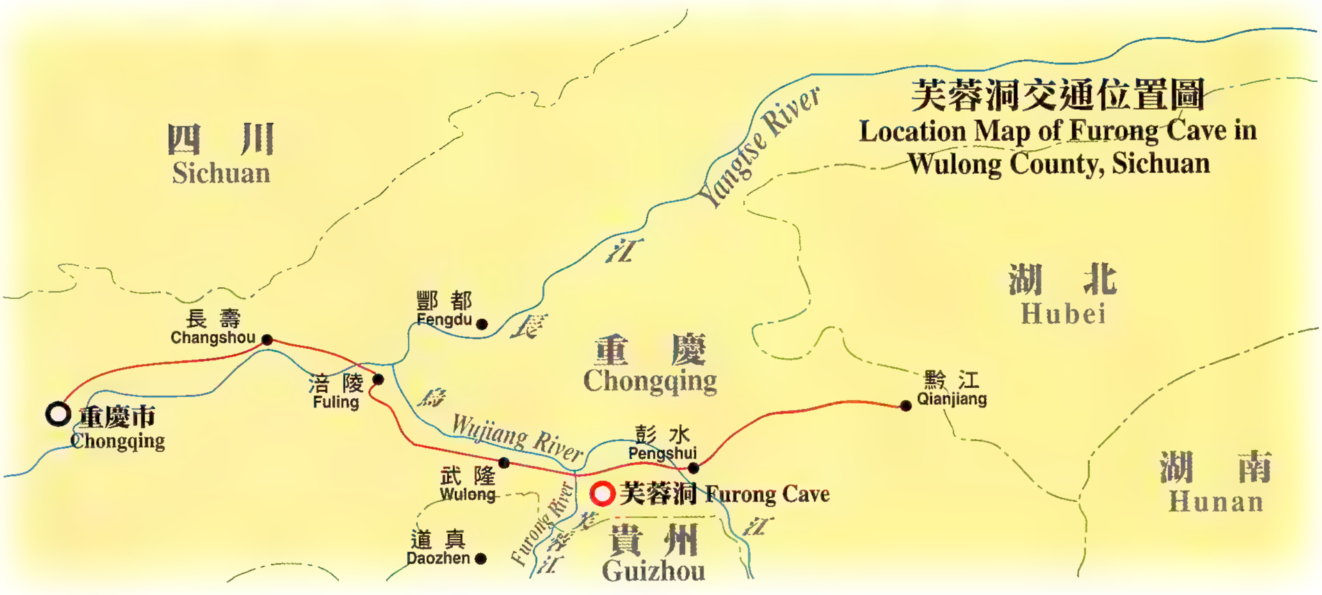
Traveller's Tips:

Hibiscus (Furong) Cave, part of the Three Gorges Scenic Area along the Yangtse River, is located at the convergence of the Wujiang and Furong rivers at Jiangkou Town, Wulong County, Chongqing Municipality. A large-size karst cave, it was formed of Cambrian Period limestone during the Pleistocene Epoch of the Quaternary Period about a million years ago. This natural cave museum contains more than 30 kinds of stalactites, stalagmites, stone pillars and stone waterfalls.

The cave consists of three scenic areas stretching two kilometres. Of the 30 major scenic attractions, there are three unique features – the gigantic stone waterfall, the Red Coral Pool and the site known as the "Source of Life". The cave is complete with sound and a semi-automatic tour guide system for visitors.

To get to the cave requires a two-hour journey by speedboat from Chaotianmen in Chongqing to Fuling. From here visitors change to a bus and arrive in another two hours at Jiangkou Town. Minibuses at the town take tourists directly to the cave.

1. The entrance of Hibiscus Cave
2. The landscape outside Hibiscus Cave


芙蓉洞交通位置圖
Location Map of Furong Cave in Wulong County, Sichuan
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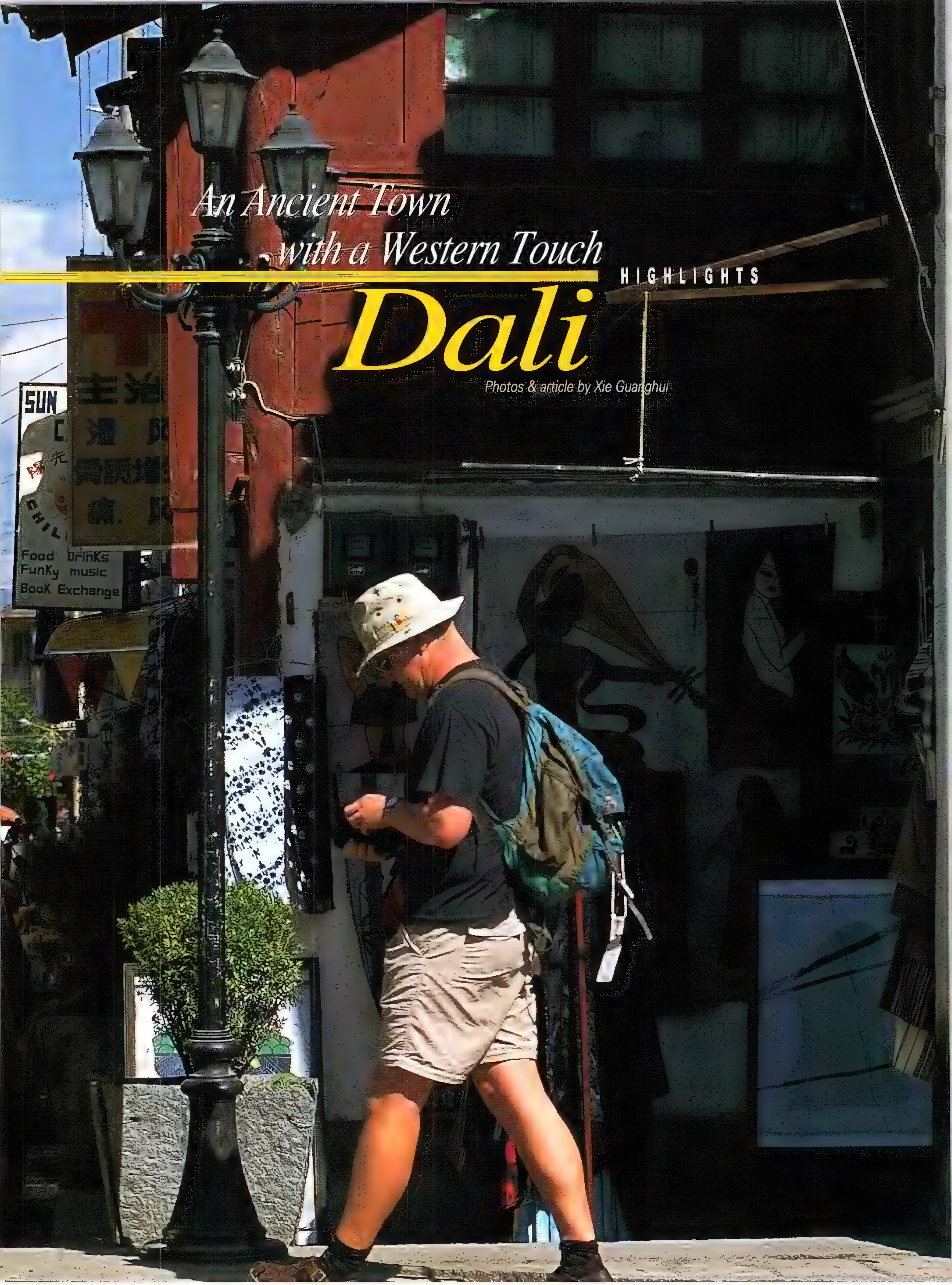
An Ancient Town with a Western Touch

Dali

Photos & article by Xie Guanghui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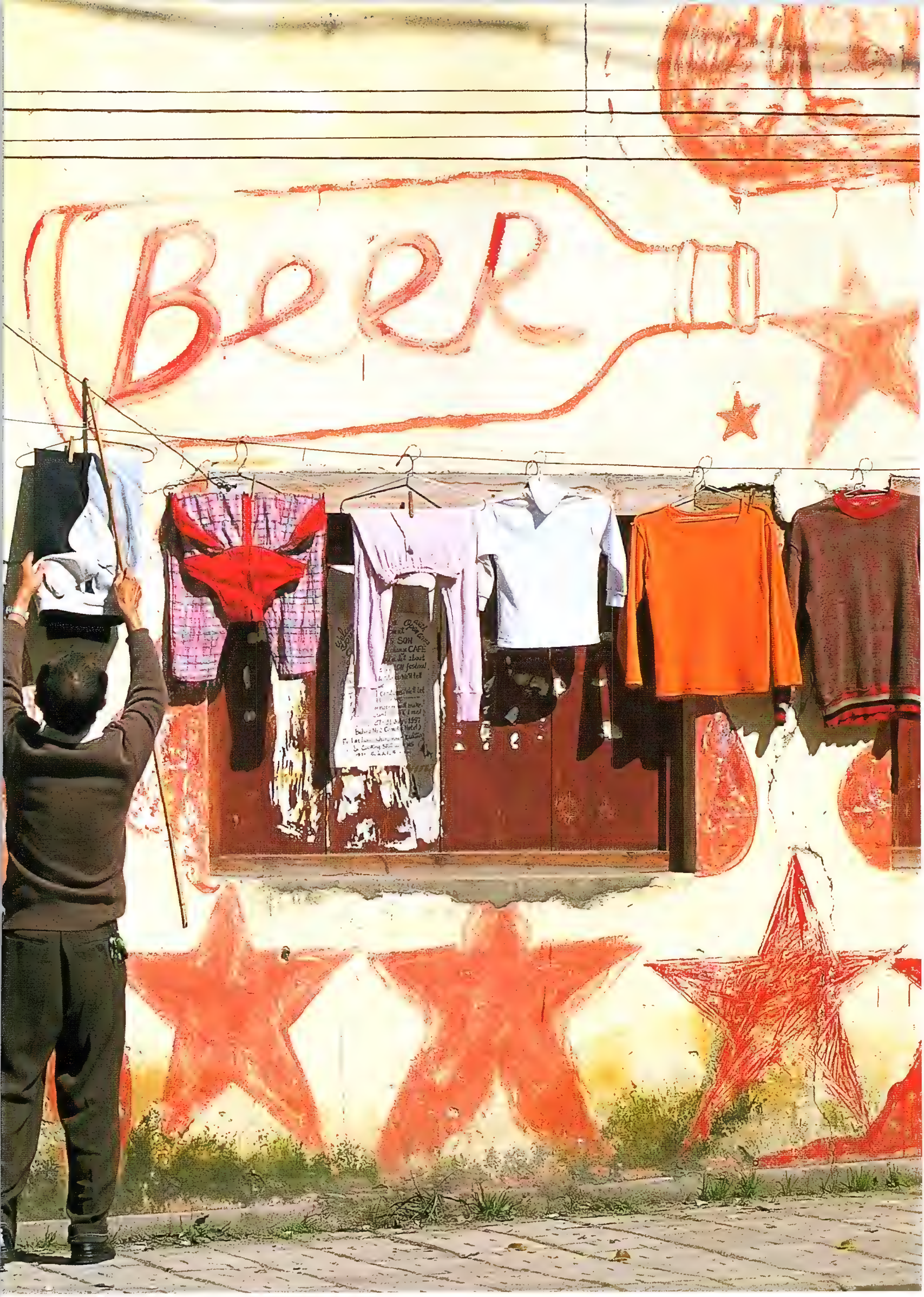

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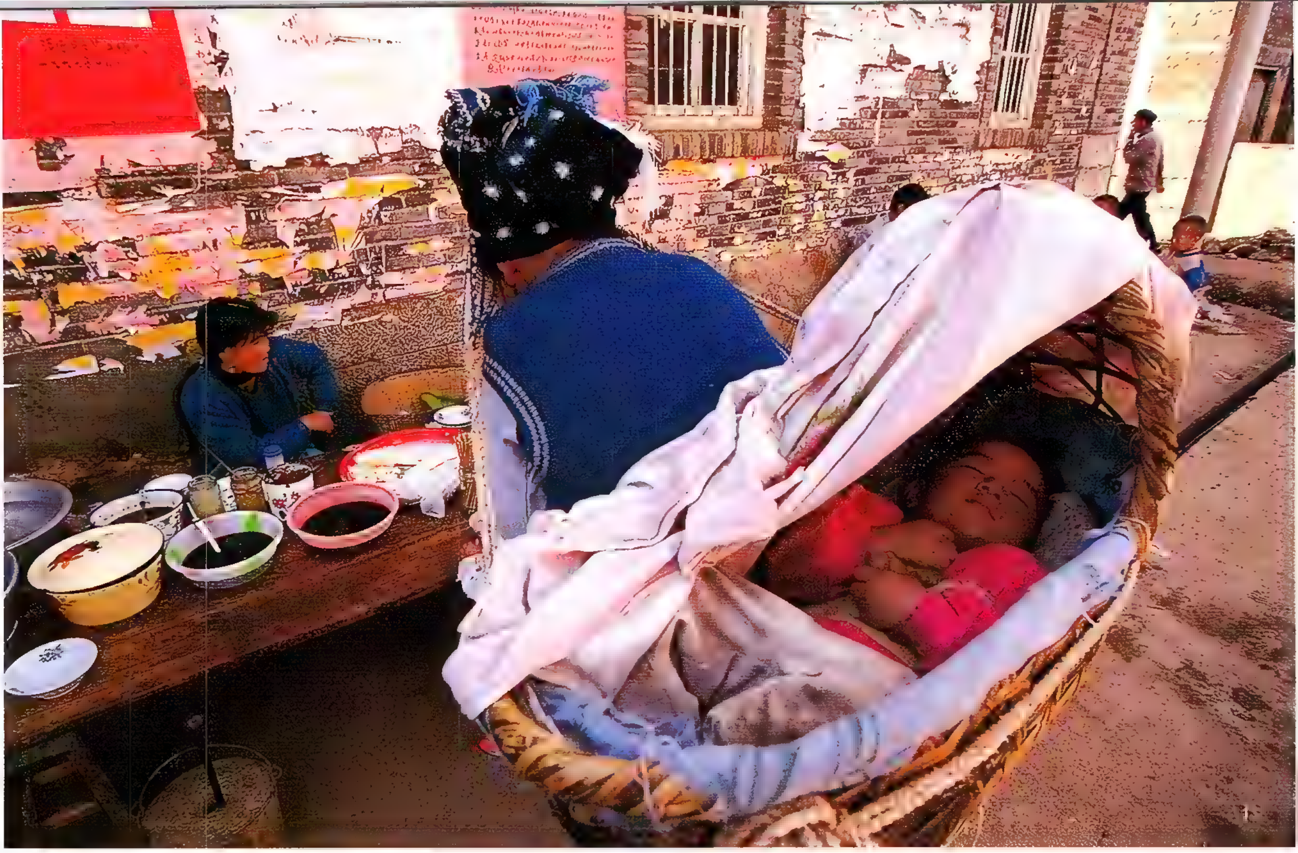

The numerous peaks of Cangshan Mountain were dyed orange red by the early morning sun. As the bus slowed down and drove carefully through the gate in the city wall, I felt as if we were travelling into the time tunnel. I heard the sound of hooves in the morning air as a few horse-drawn carts came slowly and then passed us. The misty air carried with it a faint fragrance of wild chrysanthemum and roses. On both sides of the street were long rows of wooden buildings of various heights. There were narrow alleys on either side leading into quiet and unadorned compounds of houses closely packed together. I opened my sleepy eyes, amazed, and half believed that we had returned to the kingdom of Nanzhao of 500 years ago, the world of the knights in Jin Yong's novels.

"You've arrived! You've arrived!" shouted the driver in a loud and not very polite voice, urging the passengers to get off as he pulled the bus to a stop. The passengers on the upper and lower sleeping berths seemed to have a rude call back to reality. They were hustling to put their coats on and looking around for their shoes. A group of students from the Beijing Fine Arts University, awakened from their sleep, were rubbing their eyes, looking curiously out of the windows. A few German passengers, however, seemed to know their way. Having already packed their things, they filed out of the bus and headed straight for their hotel without asking the way.

A Foreign 'China Town'?

Dali is a rather small ancient town. The busiest place in town is "Foreigners Street" on Huguo Road. Although the sun is just glancing over the roof, the proprietors of coffee houses and Western-style restaurants have already begun to lay out tables and chairs on the pavement, covering each one with a white tablecloth and placing a bunch of freshly picked flowers on it. One did not have to look carefully to see that most of the shop signs and advertisements are in English. Some are even in German, French, Japanese and other languages. Most of the patrons of these establishments are foreigners with blond hair, blue eyes and high-bridged noses. Unlike the groups of Chinese tourists who are herded here and there, these foreign tourists seemed to have no interest in visiting the Butterfly Spring, climbing Cangshan Mountain or cruising on Lake Erhai. Like retirees who have achieved their lifelong dreams, they sit there sipping coffee or engaged in unhurried conversation. Some who travelling alone sit there, often, leisurely reading a book for half a day. Any time they feel tired of reading, they would look up at the birds or the green Cangshan Mountain in the distance. It appears they would spend the rest of their days here. The atmosphere gives the impression of a reversed "China Town" from the United States or Canada.

2

Previous page: Foreigners Street in Dali

1. Bai women's traditional style of carrying a baby.

2. Horse-drawn carts are still important means of transport in Dali.

3. Gate through Dali's ancient town wall

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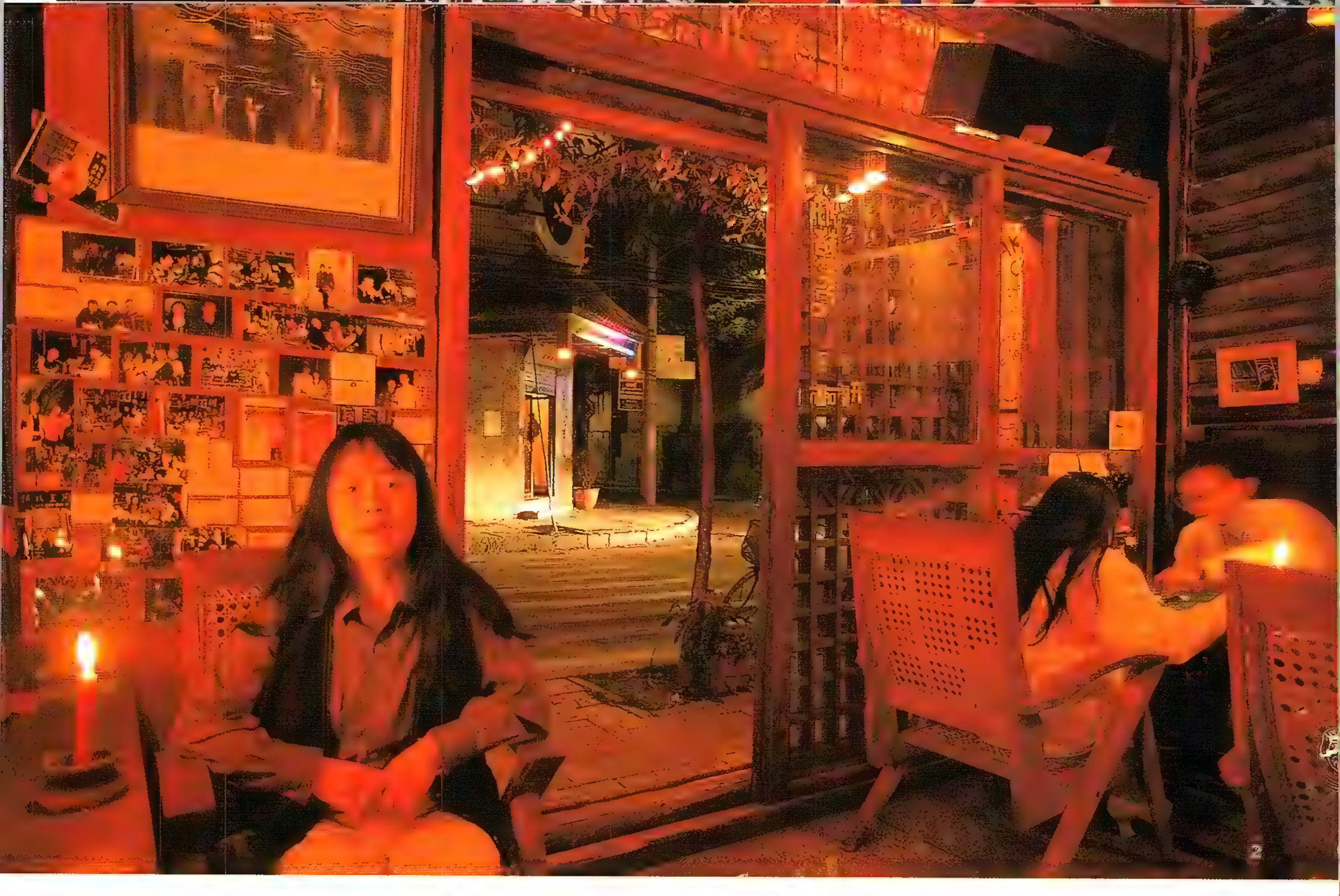

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Foreigners Train Local Chefs

OLD WOODEN HOUSE
RESTAURANT
CAFE
4

When Dali was first opened up to the outside world in 1982, it was visited by more foreigners than Chinese. As there were only a few hotels open to foreigners, most of the visitors from abroad stayed at the No.2 Hostel of the Dali county government, which has now become the Hong Shancha (Red Camellia) Hotel. Although Dali attracted the foreigners with its elegant natural scenery and favourable climate, only Chinese food was served in the hostel. For Westerners, three meals of Chinese food a day were really too much. Some quick-witted soul asked himself, "Why not open a Western-style restaurant?" The result was the Coca Cola Cafe. Even though the food was not truly satisfying, foreigners began to patronise it with smiling faces. Some even went to the kitchen to teach the chefs how to prepare and serve Swiss cheese, English tea, Italian pizza and French beef steak. As the variety increased, there were too many customers for a single restaurant to cope with, and more Western-style restaurants sprang up down Huguo Road. Hence it became known as Foreigners Street, with its fame spreading abroad and attracting larger numbers of visitors from all over the world.

1. **The tourist "sight" in Foreigners Street**
2. **A coffee house in Foreigners Street**
3. **Fang Kelin, owner of the Dragon and Phoenix Studio in Dali, carves a seal for a foreign tourist.**
4. **Foreigners Street comes alive in the evening.**
5. **Different tourists, like migratory birds, come in different seasons.**

Foreign Tourists Became One of the Sights

When Dali first began to prosper from opening up to the outside world and other reforms, foreign visitors were a rare sight to the eyes of Dali people. Then, an interesting phenomenon occurred – local people came, some over long distances, to stare at the visitors on Foreigners Street. So, the foreign tourists who came to see the sights themselves became one of the sights. Like migratory birds, tourists from different countries came in different seasons.

Dali today is no longer isolated from the rest of the world. Mary, the proprietress of the Mary Coffee House on Foreigners Street for over 10 years, married a German a few years ago. After touring throughout Europe, she had recently returned to her hometown. When I saw her, she was chatting gaily about life elsewhere with the customers in her coffee house.

After a barrage of firecrackers, I saw through the smoke an English word – INTERNET – on the front of the shop opposite the Red Camellia Hotel. The shop was owned by a Tibetan painter named Nimaduoji who, dressed in a light grey Western suit and all smiles, announced that his shop offered business services through E-mail. He had also registered as "Mekong River Valley Cultural and Art Research and Exchange Centre" on the Internet, through which, he said, the world would know more about Dali. The ancient town of Dali was joining the rest of the world at express speed. After a few days in Dali, I felt as if I was in a global village.

1. Tourists join in the song and dance.
2. Selling batik to foreigners is big business.

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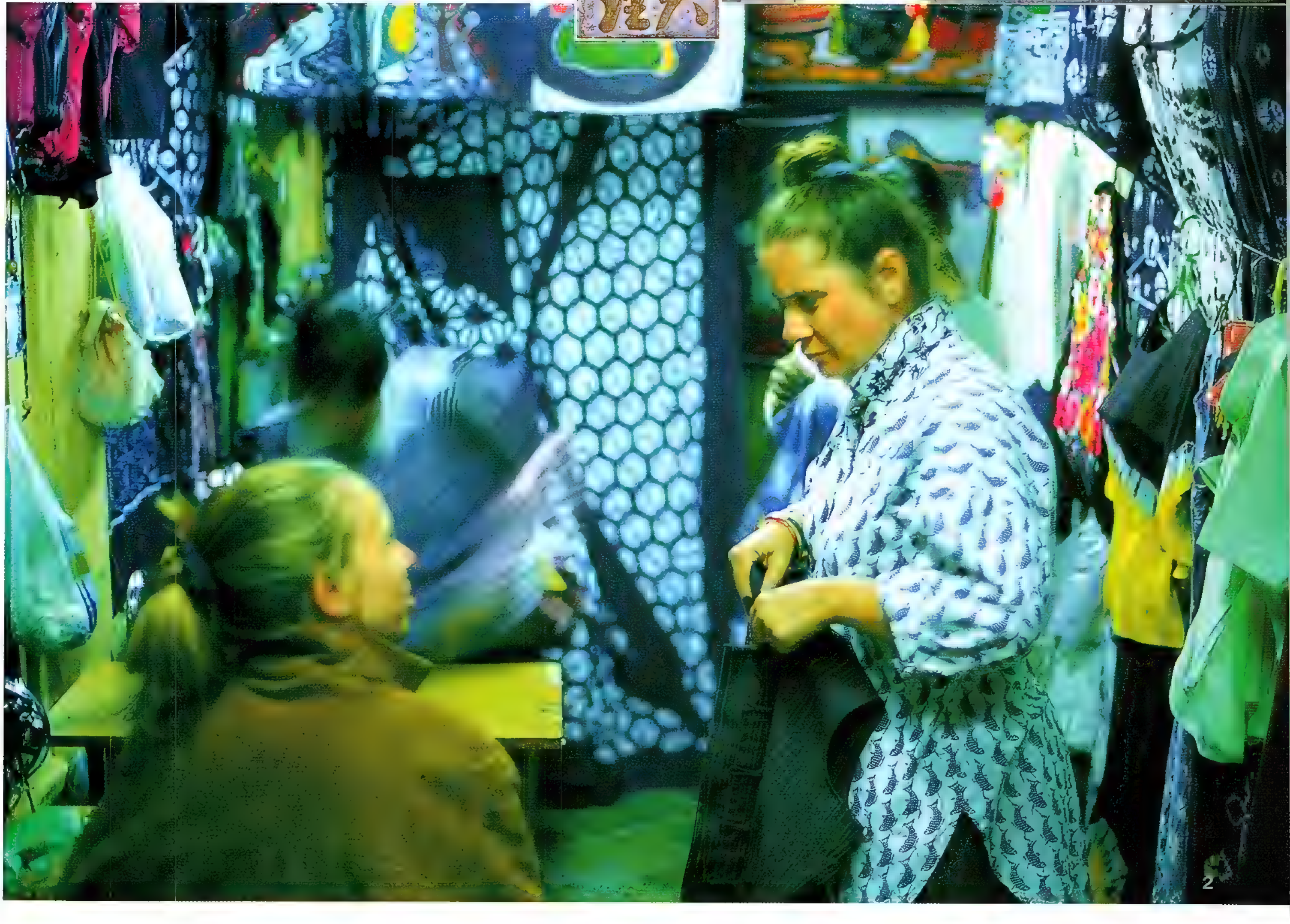
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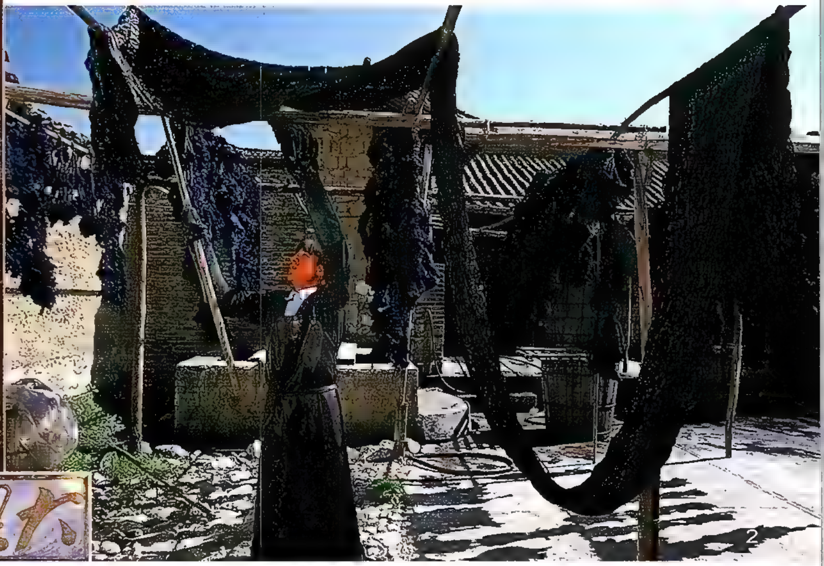
1. **A batik workshop inside an old compound of houses**
2. **The art of dyeing batik in Zhoucheng has a 400-year history.**
3. **With Zhoucheng's batik exports more than several million yuan each year, the industry has become the town's mainstay.**



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Hometown of the 'Golden Flowers'

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Other than the foreigners, another attraction in Dali are women of the Bai nationality, who have appeared in the film, *Five Golden Flowers*. The Bai women usually dress in a white coat with a white scarf on their heads. The coat is buttoned down the middle in the front and decorated with red, green and black borders. As the Bai women move around against the background of deep blue sky on the plateau, they attractively simulate floating white clouds. They are not only beautiful, but also hard-working. After finishing work on the farm, some carry a basket backpack to peddle batik to tourists on Foreigners Street or near hotels. With over 10 years of experience, they have mastered another art – making sales by pestering. One glance at the batik, and you will become their target and be followed wherever you go until you buy some. One word from you and they will know where you came from. If you ask them where they are from, they will proudly say, from Zhoucheng, the hometown of the Five Golden Flowers.

Zhoucheng is located about 30 kilometres from Dali, near the scenic area of Butterfly Spring. The most densely populated town of the Bai people, Zhoucheng is famous for its production and processing of colourful batik. It is said that Zhoucheng has a 400-year history of batik production, which was first introduced from China's Central Plains. The local Bai women tie patterns on white fabrics. The so-called "dyeing machines" are actually just a few big wooden tubs, each over two metres high, filled with vegetable dyes. The dye is never emptied, but each time new fabrics are dyed, new dyestuff is added. It is believed that old dyestuffs produce better colour.

No Secrets in Batik Art

The family batik workshops in Zhoucheng operate daily except during the busy farming season. The workers get up at dawn to heat the water for the dyes. They stir and stir, with a monstrous thick wooden stick until the dye is thoroughly dissolved before putting any fabrics in. The whole dyeing process involves more than 20 steps. At sunrise, the steaming finished fabrics are hung out between long bamboo poles, resembling the M sign of MacDonald's.

It is hard to believe that over 90 percent of Dali's batiks came from the small town of Zhoucheng. Each white pattern on a blue background and a diffusion of colours around it is done by hand. The countless wonderful changes in the patterns can only be produced by the hearts and hands of the Bai women, who have mastered the technique of batik art. In Zhoucheng, you do not need anyone to take to a batik workshop. When you see indigo residues in front of a compound, you simply knock on the door. The owner of the house will not think of your visit as an intrusion and has no fear that you may steal a trade secret. You will be allowed to see whatever you wish to see and have a warm-hearted chat as well.

The batiks of Zhoucheng display the classical taste of the East, as well as the abstract beauty of modern Western art. They are not only favoured in Japan and Southeast Asia, but also in North America and Europe. Export orders apparently total several million yuan every year, making batik production an important economic pillar of this small town.

A Batik Jacket for 35 Yuan

In the business world, one who sees opportunity beckon is successful. Duan and his wife, the owners of a shop dealing in ethnic clothing and ornaments, and arts and crafts, are both of the Bai nationality. In his shop, Duan told me his story. One day 10 years ago, he was stopped by a Japanese tourist near the Three Pagodas. "He took off his jacket and, gesturing, showed me that he wanted to exchange his jacket for the batik shirt I was wearing. When I handed my shirt to him, half believing and half doubting, he made several deep bows to show his gratitude. Back home, I told my wife what had happened. She was all smiles and said, 'Fine. I'll make several more so that you can sell them.' I tried and sold them in no time," Duan recalled. Two young visitors from Taiwan came into the shop to pick up two jackets, tailored to measure by the morning. When Duan charged them only 35 yuan for each jacket, they looked as happy as if they had won the first prize in a lottery.

1. Elderly Bai women commonly wear a batik headscarf designed and made by themselves.
2. The art of dyeing a batik requires more than 20 steps.
3. Over 90 percent of the batik fabrics in Dali are made in Zhoucheng.

Lake Erhai

Erhai, meaning "Er Sea", is a lake on the plateau whose water source begins at Dengchuan in the north and flows to the west along the Erhe River. Covering 240 square kilometres, Erhai is the largest fresh-water lake in the Hengduan Mountains in terms of water capacity. It is not without reason that the Bai people call it a sea. The waters in the lake merge with the Lancang River flowing through Burma, Thailand and Vietnam and eventually emptying into the Pacific Ocean through the Mekong River.

Most of the visitors to Dali will not miss the opportunity to tour Lake Erhai. Experienced tourists usually do not attend the organised one-day programme; instead, they go on their own to a fishing village on the lake in groups of three, four or five to look for a boat. It is really quite simple. Pay the carriage driver five yuan and tell him that you want to go to the lake, and off you will go. Under gorgeous azure skies you can feast your eyes on wheat fields swaying in the wind, and scattered dwellings of the Bai people in the distance all round. As the carriage rolls on, you soon come to the lake, filled with sunlight glittering on its waves. A friendly driver can often help find a good boat owner for you.

Sentimental Tourists

Through the mist on the lake, I saw row upon row of the junk masts in a small bay outside Longyu Village. Although the fishermen have permanent homes on shore, the junks are their mobile homes for sailing year-round on the lake. These junks of over 10 tons dead-weight are the largest vessels on Lake Erhai. They have sleeping quarters and a kitchen on the bow, freight in the hold and coops for chickens and pigs at the stern. Following the wind, the junks generally sail after midnight and reach Xiaguan the following morning. After unloading their freight, they buy necessities in the town before starting back. Close to the shore, I saw quite a few sunken junks. Some photographers from afar looked deeply sympathetic and disappointed. Some Bai children playing by the shore of the lake giggled at our sentimentality. We were told later that as the farming season had begun, most of the ship owners had gone back to their fields. The sunken junks were in fact preserved under water, waiting for the next shipping season.

1. **A bountiful catch**
2. **Most boats sail between Xiaguan and the small islands on Lake Erhai. Boatmen often refuse payment when you hitch a ride.**
3. **Whitebait, originally only found in Lake Taihu, have been successfully introduced into Lake Erhai.**

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Fishing Gypsies

Smaller motorboats ply the lake these days. About seven to eight metres long, they were called "mule boats" by the local people since they were as enduring and versatile as a mule. A family usually goes out in two boats. The first is for fishing, followed by the "family boat" for sleeping and cooking. They look for a shoal of fish in the lake and fish with a net or cormorants. When night falls, they would anchor near shore at a sheltered spot, light a fire and cook a fish dinner. As smoke curls gently upwards and reflections of the lights dance on the cold, blue surface of the lake in the silvery moonlight, the lake is transformed into a mystic world.

There are also still smaller boats which sail individually, called the "husband and wife" boats. While the wife cast the net on the bow, the husband rows from the stern. The boat's cabin is only four or five square metres, and at the same time serves as the sleeping quarters, dining room and kitchen. On fishing trips lasting 10 to 15 days, the couple would anchor near a village each night to sell their catch. Their lifestyle seems as romantic as that of the Gypsies.

Shrimps for Ducks

The Bai people living on Lake Erhai are always cheerful and warm-hearted. With burly boatmen or slim Bai girls on the lake shore, you will find easy conversation and hospitality. When tourists ask for a ride on a boat, often they are accepted willingly without charge and even invited to share a meal with the boat owners. If you are lucky, you can enjoy fresh whitebait, previously only found in Lake Taihu. Whitebait was successfully introduced in Lake Erhai, nearly 2,000 metres above sea level, only two years ago and consequently this delicious treat can be savoured by many now.

It is interesting that the people of Erhai do not like shrimps, preferring to feed them to the ducks. For this reason, shrimps are sold very cheap in the Erhai area. Tourists often pay only four or five yuan for a kilogram of live shrimps, and have them boiled in salt water to take along as snacks. A good business opportunity awaits the first person to dry and process the fresh shrimps for sale elsewhere. Then, of course, the price of this tourists' delight will go up.

Previous page: These boats were deliberately sunk to prevent cracking in the blistering heat.

1. **Catching whitebait with especially fine nets**
2. **Fishermen's families spend most of the year on their mobile homes.**
3. **Slack season is the time for sewing nets.**

Tips for the Traveller

Transportation: It is simple and convenient to go to Dali from Kunming. There is a regular return flight from Kunming to Dali every morning as well as a long-distance coach service with 20-30 scheduled runs to Dali or passing Dali. Daytime runs are made by all type of buses. Ticket prices range from 55 yuan for day-time ordinary coach, to 95 yuan for an overnight coach or luxury bus.

Suggested Itinerary: Take a cruise on Lake Erhai in the early morning from the Xiaguan jetty. Visit Tuanshan Park, the Duan royal family's deer park in the period of the Dali Kingdom, and from the pavilion at the top of the mountain, enjoy the view of Lake Erhai, the ancient town of Dali and Cangshan Mountain in the distance. As the boat cruises on, land at the islands of Lesser Putuo and Jinsuo to burn incense and worship Buddha at the temples. After disembarking, take a bus to Zhoucheng to taste freshly boiled fish and see traditional batik production.

In the afternoon, go up Cangshan Mountain by cable car and enjoy a panoramic view of the ancient town of Dali and Lake Erhai. Or, see the Three Pagodas at Chongsheng Temple and visit Guanyin Shrine and the General's Shrine. In the evening, visit Foreigners Street, have a drink and a chat with other tourists.

On the second day, take a bus to the Bai people's morning market at Xizhou Township, 35 kilometres away. See typical dwellings of the Bai people, taste the three-course tea and enjoy the ancient music of Dongjing. In the afternoon, visit Butterfly Spring, Gangdao Temple where Duan Yu, the hero in Jin Yong's novel, *Eight Branches of the Heavenly Dragon* studied Buddhism, and the Shegu (Snake Bone) Pagoda.

Lodging: Red Camellia Hotel in Dali: Standard room in the front building: 180 yuan. Standard room in the rear building (without private bathroom): 60 yuan.

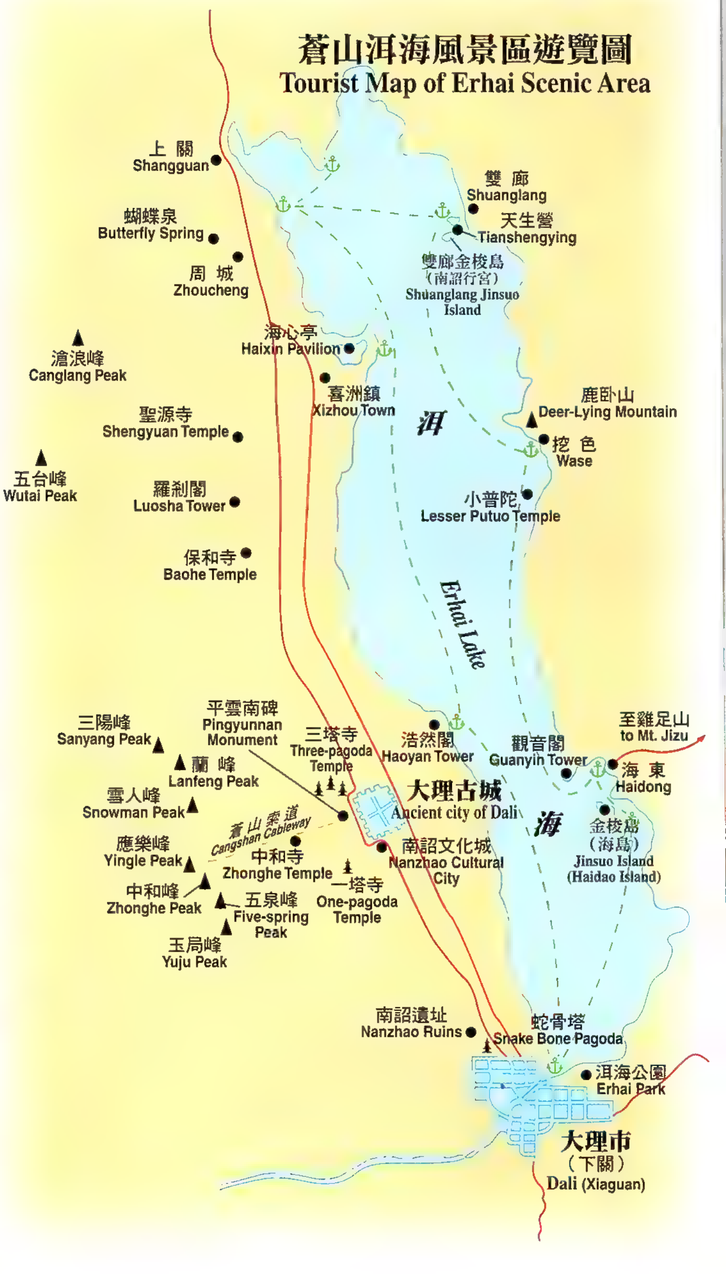
Gucheng Guesthouse: Standard room: 160 yuan.

Meigong River Valley Cultural and Art Research and Exchange Centre: This is a hostel with a dozen or so beds for both men and women together, public bathrooms and a small open-air swimming pool. Each bed is 10 yuan. Most people staying here are foreign tourists.

Cuisine: Famous Dishes: "Fish en casserole" is a famous Dali dish prepared from Lake Erhai carp, with cured ham, slices of fresh pork and chicken, mushrooms, bean curd, sea cucumber and other ingredients, over a slow fire. It is served in all large and small restaurants in Dali. Fresh fish must be used and it must be served hot. Other special dishes with a rich local flavour include the Bai people's Three-Course Tea at Zhuhai Restaurant, Spicy and Sour Carp at Tianzhuang Guesthouse, Erhai Snail Soup at Bada Hotel, and Crispy Sesame Chicken at Apricot Flower Village. Price of each dish: 10-20 yuan.

Breakfast: Eat at stalls in a stone-paved alley or under an old tree, where tables and benches sit alongside the stove. Local favourites include Xizhou Glutinous Rice Cake, Rice Cake with Cassia Flowers steamed in a bamboo tube, and Water Chestnut and Mung Bean Porridge. Breakfast for two usually costs under 10 yuan.

1. **Tianzhuang Guesthouse in Xizhou Township in traditional Bai style**
2. **Take home some butterflies from the shop in Butterfly Spring.**
3. **The Three Pagodas of Dali viewed from the Cangshan Mountain**
4. **A blue background showing off striking white patterns makes Zhoucheng batiks especially attractive.**
5. **Clothing and ornaments of the Bai make interesting souvenirs.**
6. **A new cable car makes the trip up Cangshan Mountain much more convenient.**


蒼山洱海風景區遊覽圖
Tourist Map of Erhai Scenic Area
上 關
Shangguan
雙 廊
Shuanglang
天生營
Tianshengying
蝴蝶泉
Butterfly Spring
周 城
Zhoucheng
雙廊金梭島
（南詔行宮）
Shuanglang Jinsuo Island
海心亭
Haixin Pavilion
滄浪峰
Canglang Peak
喜洲鎮
Xizhou Town
洱
鹿臥山
Deer-Lying Mountain
聖源寺
Shengyuan Temple
挖 色
Wase
五台峰
Wutai Peak
羅刹閣
Luosha Tower
小普陀
Lesser Putuo Temple
保和寺
Baohe Temple
Erhai Lake
三陽峰
Sanyang Peak
平雲南碑
Pingyunnan Monument
三塔寺
Three-pagoda Temple
浩然閣
Haoyan Tower
觀音閣
Guanyin Tower
至雞足山
to Mt. Jizu
海 東
Haidong
蘭 峰
Lanfeng Peak
雪人峰
Snowman Peak
大理古城
Ancient city of Dali
海
蒼山索道
Cangshan Cableway
金梭島
（海島）
Jinsuo Island
(Haidao Island)
應樂峰
Yingle Peak
中和寺
Zhonghe Temple
南詔文化城
Nanzhao Cultural City
中和峰
Zhonghe Peak
五泉峰
Five-spring Peak
一塔寺
One-pagoda Temple
玉局峰
Yuju Peak
南詔遺址
Nanzhao Ruins
蛇骨塔
Snake Bone Pagoda
洱海公園
Erhai Park
大理市
（下關）
Dali (Xiaguan)

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DISCOVERIES

- *Walking through the Namjagbarwa Canyon*
- *Starting from Pailong Township of Nyingchi County*
- *Ending at Zhibai Township of Mainling County 45 days later*
- *An expedition team of eight experts and 18 local porters*
- *Wiping off 47 leeches from one man's feet*
- *Mixed Ophiolite – important discovery*
- *Phallic culture at Lugu Village*

Adventures in the Namjagbarwa Canyon of Tibet

Photos by Hong Yang   Article by Geng Quanru

An exploration team of eight geologists and cameramen trekked – on foot – through the entire length of the Namjagbarwa Canyon around Mt.Namjagbarwa, the highest peak in the eastern region of the Himalayas. This trip could never have been accomplished without the help of the local government and a crew of Tibetan porters.

It was an incredible feat, for there is no canyon like this in the world – 653 kilometres long with an average depth of 5,000 metres. The sheer rigours of the trek were already a tough challenge to the team members, but they also had the daunting task of achieving all their scientific and cultural goals within 45 days as well.

First Things First: Recruiting

June 20: Our eight-member team of six researchers and photographers from the Chengdu Institute of Geology and two officials from the Tibet Tourism Administration (TTA) assembled at the Pailong Monba Autonomous Township of Nyingchi County in Tibet. Before we set off on the trek, we investigated the hot springs and other geological features along the Pailong Zangbo River, a tributary of the Yarlung Zangbo River.

Early the next morning, we began sorting and registering all the supplies we needed to bring along: photography equipment, tents, generators, gasoline, bags for geological samples, compasses, magnifiers, and altimeters. We calculated food supplies as well and noted stops for replenishment. Then we packed up each package into maximum 25 kilograms, the quota fixed for each porter.

Recruiting porters was a major task; the few able-bodied men in the area were so busy with farming and hunting that even a chance to earn extra money could not lure them away. Without the help of the Pailong township government we could never have recruited enough essential help.

June 27: At 8:00 a.m., 18 robust men reported to the township office, and immediately began haggling over who carried what. This ruckus stemmed from the popular belief that one would rather carry 100 catties of dead weight than 10 catties of rotten cotton – meaning a bulging package is the last thing a carrier wants no matter how light it is. It took us almost three hours to arrange everything so it was near 11:00 a.m. before we started out.

Chance Encounters

The journey from Pailong to Zaqu took the whole day. In June 1993, I travelled on this same road as part of a month-long journey with four American explorers. Retracing my old footsteps, I found that the road had now changed beyond recognition and many wooden bridges had been torn apart by floods. And, today the rain was incessant.

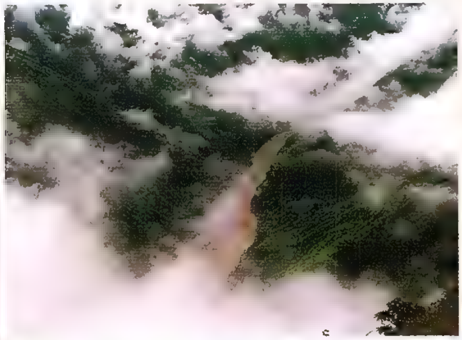
Suddenly, Qoigyi, who was in the lead, screamed and, shaking, pointed to a boa constrictor at least three metres long lying in the middle of the road. We had to pelt the snake with stones before it nonchalantly moved out of our way.

As we plodded on in the rain, we saw a horde of butterflies – probably hundreds of thousands – hiding under a huge monolith. Frightened by us, they rose up in panic, filling the grey sky with every colour of the rainbow.

Trials and Tribulations

With some bridges washed away, we often found ourselves wading across rivers of foaming rapids. Each time one of the porters forded the river first and fixed a long rope for the rest of us to cross safely.

Is Namjagbarwa the World's No. 1 Canyon?



The Yarlung Zangbo cuts a turbulent eastbound course, making a huge U-turn around Namjagbarwa Mountain, the highest in the eastern region of the Himalayas Mountains at 7,782 metres. The canyon is 653 kilometres long; the narrowest point of the canyon is 21 kilometres wide; and the deepest section, 5,913 metres. The Colca Canyon is 3,203 metres deep at its maximum with a minimum width of 24.2 kilometres. The Colorado's Grand Canyon is 440 kilometres. Perhaps a new entry is needed for Namjagbarwa — the world's deepest, longest and narrowest canyon.

A bird's eye view of the World's No. 1 canyon

Previous page: Crossing turbulent waters (by Geng Quanru)

1. **A distance view of Gangrengabo**
2. **One of the few sections of the road which allow horses to pass**
3. **Snakes are sighted frequently in the rain forests.**
4. **Butterflies resting underneath a rock**

Safety was a high priority for a trip like this. During my previous trip, we had come close to serious misfortune when our Tibetan cook had slipped and fallen into the Pailong Zangbo River, nearly been washed downstream.

We found an open patch of grassland and quickly pitched our tents for the night. The 18 porters were put up in two hunters' cabins conveniently found nearby.

The gas stove we had brought along refused to work, and, hungry, we had no alternative but to dig a fire pit and collect wood. Finally we had our dinner of noodles and canned pork.

Exhausted from the struggles of our first day, we tucked ourselves into our sleeping bags only to awaken at midnight scratching all over. Switching on the torch, we found we were being attacked by a swarm of fleas. The rest of the night became a battle between men and insects.

A Japanese Rafting Accident

June 28: We arrived at Zaqu Village, the first settlement on our route. Most villages in the canyon are small communities of Monba, Loba and Tibetan, speaking different languages but somehow communicating with each other.

Despite its obscurity, Zaqu is an important stop for canyon explorers, being situated at the confluence of the Pailong Zangbo and Yarlung Zangbo rivers, and at the middle section of the great bend. On a clear day, the striking Namjagbarwa and Gyarabeili mountains dominate the horizon.

In 1994, a team of Japanese adventurers arrived here for white water rafting. Unfortunately the turbulent water overturned their raft and swept away two team members, killing one. The father who lost his son often comes to the village to mourn the soul of the dead.

Explorers of the Namjagbarwa Canyon

Francis Kingdom Ward, a British botanist, was the first man on a scientific expedition to visit the great bend of the Yarlung Zangbo River. In the 1920s, with some local Tibetan guides he entered the canyon and later wrote favourably of the sublime beauty of the canyon and the exotic customs of the local people.

On August 15, 1956, an earthquake with a magnitude of 8.5 on the Richter scale hit the area, causing much destruction and landslides, and completely obliterating the sole footpath into the canyon. Thus the area became completely isolated.

The Chinese Academy of Sciences organised China's first scientific exploration of the canyon from 1982-84, and laid the foundation to further study the local geological, zoological, botanical, meteorological, and environmental conditions.

Ward's 1920s visit excited many Western adventurers, including Richard Fisher, an Arizona University canyon expert. Having visited all the world's famous canyons and published numerous articles and books, he put on his list the last place — Namjagbarwa.

After tremendous effort, Fisher finally joined researchers from

Chengdu Mineral Research Institute on an 1992 expedition. In May and October the following year, the research teams hiked into the Yarlung Zangbo River canyon. During May-October 1993, a joint Sino-American expedition team made history as man's first successful trek through the entire length of the Namjagbarwa Canyon.

Walking along a terrain path

Partly for this reason, Zaqu Village reminded us of the courage needed to challenge the mystery and whims of nature.

Zaqu: Surprising Geological Findings

Gaibo, the old village head, recognised me immediately. In 1993, I had stayed at his home for the night, since there was no inn in the village. Today, there is a guesthouse — a shell filled with only a heap of

1. In a humid forest
2. A rather precarious bridge
3. A pond in a primeval forest

firewood alongside a stone fireplace. Some of my fellow team members jokingly called it a "six-star hotel".

Our geologists were puzzled by the uncharacteristic geology around the village. Here the Indian and Euro-Asian plates met and therefore should be under strong stress, but the characteristic large-scale, high-angle tectonic upthrust is unaccountably absent. Instead, signs of downcutting and sliding movements are everywhere.

Foul weather kept the northern peak of the Namjagbarwa Mountain hidden, yet the photographers kept their lenses aimed, hoping for a miracle. It was all to no avail; the thick mist would not allow even a quick glimpse.

July 1: While waiting in silence with our cameras aimed at the misty mountain, we were jolted by the explosive pops of firecrackers. In the village, a group of youths began singing and dancing. We soon found out that it was the villagers' celebration of Hong Kong's return to the motherland.

Baryu: Return to Bad Memories

Baryu is a remote village in the south of Yi'ong Township linked to Ganda Township, Medog County by the Garbola Mountain Pass. There are no fond memories for me here.

In 1993, I joined some American explorers on a geological and botanical expedition. We acclimatised ourselves at Gyegar Village for four days, then spread out in two groups to systematically cover the canyon, planning to meet up in Baryu. The group leader, Fisher, unfortunately sidelined with chronic leg troubles, graciously gave up the chance to hike through the great canyon; he implored me, and four of the best in his team, to fulfil all explorers' dreams.

In the depths of the Namjagbarwa Canyon were hidden ruins of a monastery which had a glorious past thronged with pilgrims from eastern and western Tibet. Some kind of road leading down into the canyon must have existed before; indeed, Ward, a British botanist, had included it in his 1920s travelogue of eastern Tibet. But the 1951 earthquake, measuring nine on the Richter scale, had virtually destroyed the monastery and presumably the path as well, making our team's job the most difficult.

Why is the Rift at Namjagbarwa So Important?

Fisher's team finished their exploration quickly and went on to Baryu. Our team, on the other hand, found ourselves in grave danger. With no road to follow, and only a compass and map, we got totally lost. Exhausted and hungry, on a mountain slope, we found ourselves going nowhere, our path ahead a plummeting abyss. By chance, some hunters' dogs found us, and the hunters from Kotoin Village led us to safety.

We only felt the full impact of our ordeal when all the Baryu villagers came out to welcome our dirty, dishevelled party. There, we learned that Fisher and the porters' relatives, having waited for seven days in mounting fear, had called in the local military authorities to search for us. The folks of Baryu Village — old and young, men and women — all treated me like an old friend this time when they saw me again, making me feel right at home.

Baryu Village is the most favourable point to see the incredible Kangrigarbo Mountain soaring a spectacular 7,000 metres into the sky out of the depths of that daunting great canyon.

An Outdoor 'Hotel'

July 6–7: With no visible road, it took us two days to get from Baryu to Lugu Village in Medog County, sometimes climbing steep cliffs, or jumping huge gaps between rocks. The weather did not cooperate — it

World-wide attention has focused on the rift along the Yarlung Zangbo River. Part of the geological structure of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau – a well-preserved ophiolite belt – serves as indisputable proof that the Euro-Asian and Indian plates long ago met here. Through our field work the rift's course has been verified, showing that in the area around the great bend it basically follows the river valley. Hence, we concluded the valley must be the final position in the joining of the two plates.

The geological significance of the 1.5-kilometre stretch of mixed ophiolite outcrops on the riverside cliffs in south Jiaresa Township is overwhelming. Our geologists were able for the first time to describe and study the characteristics of the outcrops of this important ophiolite belt.

The canyon offers rich resources for geological studies.

1. Cooking and eating in the wild (by Zeng Chengdong)
2. The huge rock serving as the "outdoor hotel"
3. The canyon is veiled by clouds and mists all year round.

rained continuously. Soaked right through our raincoats, we were also perspiring copiously, and this made a strange picture – warm vapour was wafting up from our heads. With the cold and the dampness, the fear of being frozen numb prevented us from stopping too long for breaks.

On the night of July 6, we stopped at a place called Bangguo. A huge outcrop protruded from a pebbly slope, providing a wonderful natural shelter — a real godsend as we had trouble finding level ground to pitch our tents. All 25 of us — in addition to our luggage — were stuffed into the shelter, which someone in the team called great outdoor 'hotel'. We managed to start three fires to dry our clothes, warm our bodies and cook our supper. We treated ourselves with the most delicious food we had that night — canned pork, fish cooked with preserved black beans, noodles and pickles. After the meal, everybody settled down to a sound sleep.

Lurking Menaces: 47 Leeches from One Man's Feet

The incessant rain brought out the leeches lurking in the woods, and consequently we all suffered. In the sun these annelid worms would languidly curl up on the underside of leaves. But, in the rain they would extend themselves outwards looking for a victim. The smell of blood seems particularly inviting to them. By the time one feels itchy, the leeches have usually already had their fill.

Our lead man in the procession was the most susceptible fellow, and so, we had to rotate frequently. Zeng, a photographer, chalked up an unbeatable record pulling 47 leeches off his feet.

Apart from leeches, there were other menaces, such as fleas, hornets, poisonous snakes, and wild beasts. The grass fleas here have adapted particularly well, with modified mouths to pierce sharply and draw blood voraciously; they are decidedly fond of hiding in men's moustaches. Both Lu and Zeng, with their luxurious moustaches, suffered badly.

It wasn't all bad on the journey to Lugu. We had the great fortune to see the graceful fir trees of Gebula Mountain Pass, peculiar rocks on the mountain slopes, and stunning waterfalls — all photographic prizes. Their images would, unfortunately, have to remain only in our minds, for with the rain and the poor light we could not capture them on film.

Phallic Culture

Ji Jiuzheng, a well-known folklorist working in Medog County for years, had told us of the Monba and Loba people's tradition of carving alder wood — abundant in the canyon — into phallic symbols. These are set up on farmland or hung under eaves to guarantee a bumper crop and to prevent scandals affecting the household. So far, however, we saw no evidence of this tradition. Perhaps the tradition was fading with the younger generations.

July 7: Although our scientific investigations and collection of samples had been fruitful, we were grateful to have ended the arduous trek over the Gebula Mountain Pass, to arrive at Lugu Village. Unfortunately, Qoigyi had suffered a bad bout of arthritis and we had no choice but to send him back to Lhasa ahead of schedule.

Lugu Village is home to about a dozen families who make their living farming and hunting, but it is a hard life eking out a decent living. With little access to the outside world, primitive customs such as using bow and arrows for hunting remain firmly entrenched.

An Unexpected Discovery in a Corn Field

July 9: With unusually fine weather today, Lü, Wang and Zeng went off to shoot village folklore. Hong, Liu, Zheng and I climbed up onto a mountain outcrop to collect samples, and take panoramic pictures. Directly below us was a typical example of slash-and-burn farming with the ashes still clearly visible, the tender green leaves of the young corn popping through the ground.

Out of the corner of my eye, I saw a wood frame at the edge of the field on a mountain slope. When I saw the several tall wood sticks on it, I suddenly realised that we had found the famous phallic symbols. There, 12 of them stood, decaying with time and weather. They were crude but vivid and very lifelike. Obviously, at one time, they had been colourfully decorated.

Like a devoted worshipper, Hong took out his video camera and shot the scene from all directions.

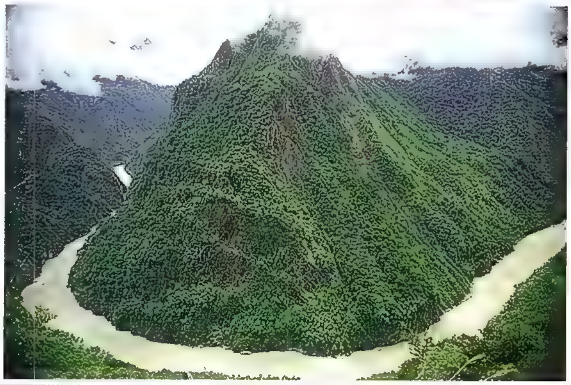
A Formidable Crossing

In recent years the primitive pulley-cable crossings and rattan bridges across the Yarlung Zangbo River were replaced by safer and wider suspension bridges. However, we found ourselves in one of those places not yet converted, looking at a two-kilometre-long pulley-cable crossing over to Gandai. A formidable task faced us — moving a dozen men and a 1,000 kilograms of luggage across the river on a single cable.

Our most agile porter went across first with a nylon rope fastened to his waist and one of the pulleys. As soon as he leapt out onto the cable, with shrill, grating racket, he shot down across to the centre; from there it was an laborious climb using hands and feet, up to the other side of the river. For most of the team members, it was the first time that we ever saw such a device, never mind use one. So, the local

1. Religious stone carvings of the Monba
2. This plant found on a mountain slope is as tall as a man.
3. A primitive grinder
4. An old Monba man
5. A happy villager having his picture taken

Why Does the Yarlung Zangbo Zigzag?



Innumerable bends guide the course of the Yarlung Zangbo River. Some sections are like switchbacks. During this expedition, we found the true geological explanation for this: First, the impact of the thrust of the Indian Continental plate's north-eastern corner into the Euro-Asian plate created a U-shaped rift valley. The "great bend" in the river was created in this way.

Second, the numerous mini-bends were formed when the river's flow was blocked by hard quartzite formations of the fault zones; the water had no choice but to change directions to run parallel with the rock layers. The section at Zaqu is a good example of this.

Left: The great bend on the Yarlung Zangbo River

porters had to work out some way to help us handle the crossing. As a result, we were each literally bound to our luggage on the cable while the porters pulled us across.

Mixed Ophiolite: An Important Discovery

Since the continuous rain had caused landslides along the riverbank in south Gyarasa Township, the trail was washed out and we had no choice but to climb cautiously across the cliff edge. Despite this hardship, we ended up happy; the rain had exposed a patch of mixed ophiolite, a kind of igneous rock associated with deep-sea sediments.

Some 50 million years ago, the Himalayan region lay beneath the Sea of Tethys, a part of the Mediterranean Sea separating the Euro-Asian continent from the Indian continent. The Indian plate, pushed by the continuous northward expansion of the Indian Ocean central ridge, collided with the Euro-Asian plate, and the two were combined.

Consequently, the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, caught in the middle, rose. The sediments of the original Sea of Tethys decayed and metamorphosed into mixed ophiolites as subsidence of the basin floor occurred. This discovery provided conclusive evidence of the rift between the two continental plates.

The belt of ophiolites along the Yarlung Zangbo River extends over 1,000 kilometres, and is in mostly inaccessible areas. Therefore, the discovery of mixed ophiolite in this area is precious proof of this geological activity and a great triumph for the scientists of this expedition.

Forests, Fruits and More Menaces

The picture-perfect valleys of Lhoyu Prefecture are often compared to China south of the Yangtze River. The warm climate supports such vast tracts of primitive forests that a Japanese explorer dubbed it the "last pure land on earth". And perhaps that is why Lhoyu has become the subject of "Hidden Lands", a doctorate dissertation by Hinmid Sarde, a Harvard University scholar who has accompanied me on many expeditions.

In the dense woods, wild fruits flourished – red lotus roots, strawberries, and many others. While we savoured the delicious fruits, hordes of mosquitoes and gadflies savoured our blood. Their bites were far more poisonous than the leeches and soon we all suffered rashes, inflammation and swollen skin.

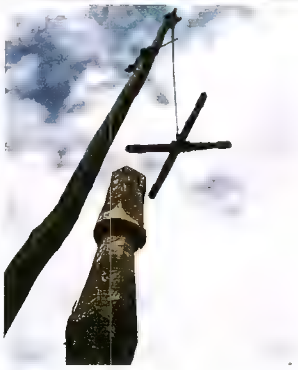
Lü and Zeng, both having sensitive skin, suffered the most. By the time we had reached Medog County, they both had skin eruptions so bad that they had to take antibiotics at the local clinic. We had to wait several days before they were well enough to continue on with the expedition.

A Devoted Watchdog

Going out to relieve oneself in the outdoor lavatory was a terrible experience. Hordes of mosquitoes, some big, some tiny, attacked your body as soon as they found some bare skin. Though their bites were not necessarily poisonous, they were painful and severely irritating.

On July 16, when we stayed at a farmer's house for the night, Lü,

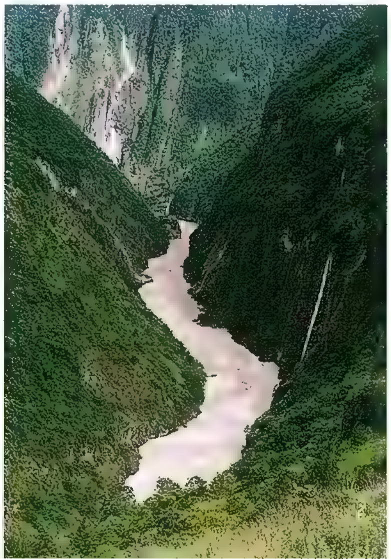
The Origin of Phallic Symbolism



The Monba people's worship of man's genitals is rooted in the primitive beginnings of their society. Phallic symbols, ranging from one foot to one metre long, are carved in alder wood and decorated with patterns. They were usually placed on the left side of the front gate stairs or hung from the portal to guarantee good health and to prevent family scandals. When planted in the fields, they were believed to be able to guarantee a good harvest.

But today, with improved medical service, and dropping infant mortality rates, the younger generation no longer feel the need for such phallic culture. Remnants of this tradition can still be found occasionally. One such location is in a corn field near Lugu Village. There are crudely designed phallic symbols, painted with red lines at the base, standing in the field, to ensure a good harvest.

A wooden phallic symbol found in Lugu Village



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who was suffering from diarrhoea, had to go to the lavatory repeatedly during the night. Once, as he was concentrating on keeping the mosquitoes away from him, he suddenly saw a pair of green eyes staring back at him from the darkness. Frightened, thinking it might be a wolf, he pulled up his pants and rushed at breakneck speed back to the house.

When our host heard about what had happened, he laughed heartily, explaining with his rusty Mandarin that it was not a wolf, but his dog who was carrying out its master's order to protect his guest.

Twelve Days to Hew a Loba Stone Wok

July 17: At a Loba village in Bangxin Township hand-hewn stone woks are a speciality. The craftsmen's skills were superb, but it was the material used that surprised us — ultrabasic rock, a kind of ophiolite.

1. Sacrifices made of corn flour and other grains by the Monba (by Zeng Chengdong)
2. The Yarlung Zangbo River running through the deep canyon
3. A local man crossing a river

At their quarry, the township head showed us how a huge piece of stone was first chipped from the cliff, then its four corners were roughly rounded. Further chipping and chiselling bring it down to the appropriate size. When the wok was completely hewn, both the inside and bottom were polished.

One slip and the entire 12-day process to make a wok 60 cm across could end in disaster.

It Takes a Five-Day Walk in Any Direction to Reach a Highway

July 19: Today we arrived at this isolated place on the Tibetan plateau, for a six-day stay. Medog, situated at the river's great bend, is the only county in China yet to be linked to a highway. It takes a five-day walk in any direction to get to a highway; this means that Medog is probably the most remote and the most secluded town in the world. There is virtually no commerce to speak of in the county, save for a few tiny shops to serve the local people.

Every day a county official escorted our three photographers on trips to nearby villages to record local scenes and ethnic folklore. Liu, Zheng and I went to observe the local geology and botany, and were

Virgin Forests Ideal for Wildlife

The Yarlung Zangbo River valley extends right into India. Consequently, the warm and humid air currents of the Indian Ocean flow northward into the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, where it collides with the dry, cold air of the plateau at the Himalayas Mountains, creating an annual precipitation of 3,500 mm. In one 50-kilometre stretch from Namjagbarwa Mountain to Didong

Prefecture, the drop in altitude is greater than 7,000 metres. Thus, the climate there ranges from the arctic to the subtropical — ideal natural conditions for nurturing vast stretches of virgin forests overflowing with various types of wildlife.

The wildlife around the river's great bend are particularly representative of species found in both the north and south of China, including those originating three million years ago. Historical data and the findings of this expedition revealed that the great bend of the Yarlung Zangbo River is home to endangered species such as long-tailed monkeys, snow leopards, tigers, antelopes, brown-necked hornbills, and other rare species such as Assamese macaques, rhesus monkeys, lesser pandas, otters, and Tibetan antelopes.

As the climate ranges from the arctic to the subtropical, plants differ with the rise of altitude from the bottom of the canyon to the top of the mountain.

excited by the locals' first-hand information.

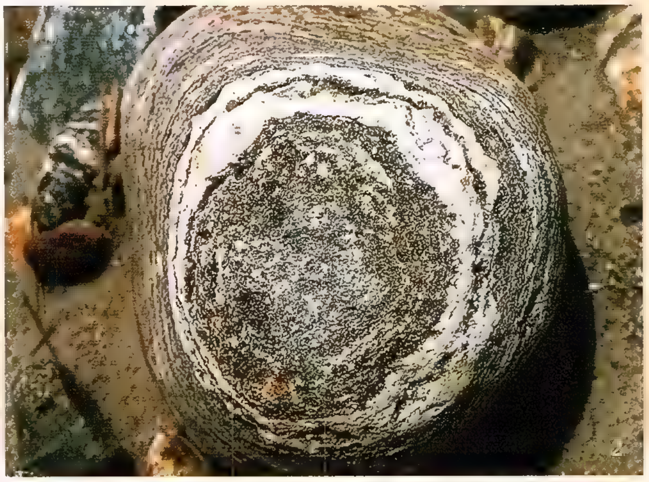
The Monba and Loba people were both warm and hospitable, and treated us to their own brand of local wine brewed from corn and wild fruit.

'Uncle Dangman'

One of our photographers, Zeng, picked up the nickname "dangman", Tibetan for "the man who loves to eat snake". This was because, while in Gandai, he had caught a two-metre-long snake, skinned and cleaned it, and cooked a delicious meal.

When the local Monba folks heard that the members of the expedition team were having snake for dinner, they were amazed. They never knew that snakes could be eaten.

Since there were plenty of snakes around, it suddenly became Zeng's duty to prepare tasty snake dishes every night. Zeng's towering build and thick moustache, and his snake dinners quickly earned him the name "Uncle Dangman" from the porters. Zeng was delighted with his new name!



Crossing Over the Misty Duoxiongla Mountain

Duoxiongla Mountain, at 4,400 metres, is perpetually enveloped in clouds. Until recently the mountain itself was a natural barrier, and not even a narrow footpath existed through this part of the Himalayas to Lhoyu. It was very common to hear of tragic falls. Now a paved horse trail between Paiqu Town and Medog ensures supplies get through. In summer, when the snow thaws, the trail comes alive with caravans of all sorts goods and medicines on their way into Medog.

July 28: We arrived at Nagar, the last stop before our final destination, Paiqu Town. From here, we had to cross the Duoxiongka Mountain. We planned to reach the top of the Duoxiongla Mountain before 2:00 p.m., before the mists became too thick and made our journey even more difficult.

We succeeded by half past one and from the top we could watch the mountain's typical distinct climate unfold below us. Billowing clouds marched in from the southern slope, only to be blocked by a cold draft from the northern slope. Under the thick blanket of white clouds lay a vast forest, like a silkworm in a cocoon, while the sun shone

1. A Monba village nestled on a mountain slope
2. Eclogite, an important discovery of the expedition team

vibrantly on masses of rocks on the northern slopes. The scenery of Duoxiongla Mountain was really a breath-taking delight after all the difficulties of our trip!

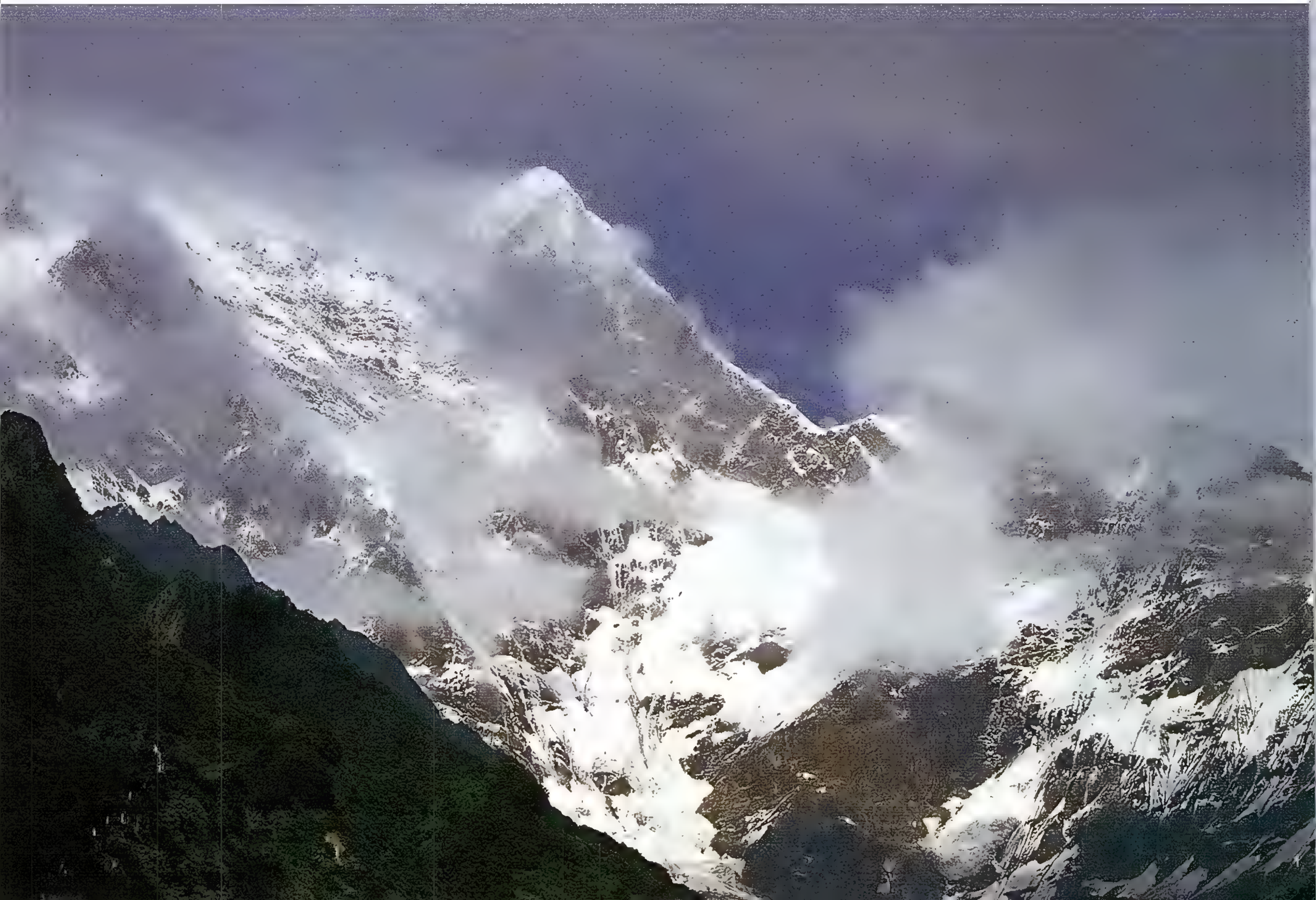
Images of Namjagbarwa Mountain

Our two days in Paiqu Town gave us great opportunities to shoot roll after roll of Namjagbarwa Mountain. The sight of this highest peak in the eastern Himalayas was well worth waiting for. We also had plenty of time to closely examine the geological structure of the western slope of its southern peak.

The supply station was empty so we made full use of the compound and shared some meals with its three staff members. After enduring so much wetness, we were pleased to be in the dry northern climate free of the merciless mosquitoes. Everyone in the team suddenly became healthy again.

August 30: In the early morning, we captured Namjagbarwa Mountain on film, bathed in the morning glow. As the sun beat down from the east, the shadow of the southern peak created unique patterns in the snow-covered lands below. Gyarabeili Peak completed the impressive picture, filling in the northern side of the canyon.

Slash-and-Burn Farming



The Monba and Loba people of Lhoyu continue to use the traditional slash-and-burn farming method. With little arable land in an area of heavily wooded mountains and ravines, the local people have reclaimed wasteland to feed their growing population.

From November to February, they choose a relatively level mountain slope where the sunshine is plentiful, and cut down all the trees and bushes. Sometime between March and May, they burn them, producing potassium-rich ashes that make excellent fertiliser for the crops. A few days later, the sowing of corn, millet and beans begins.

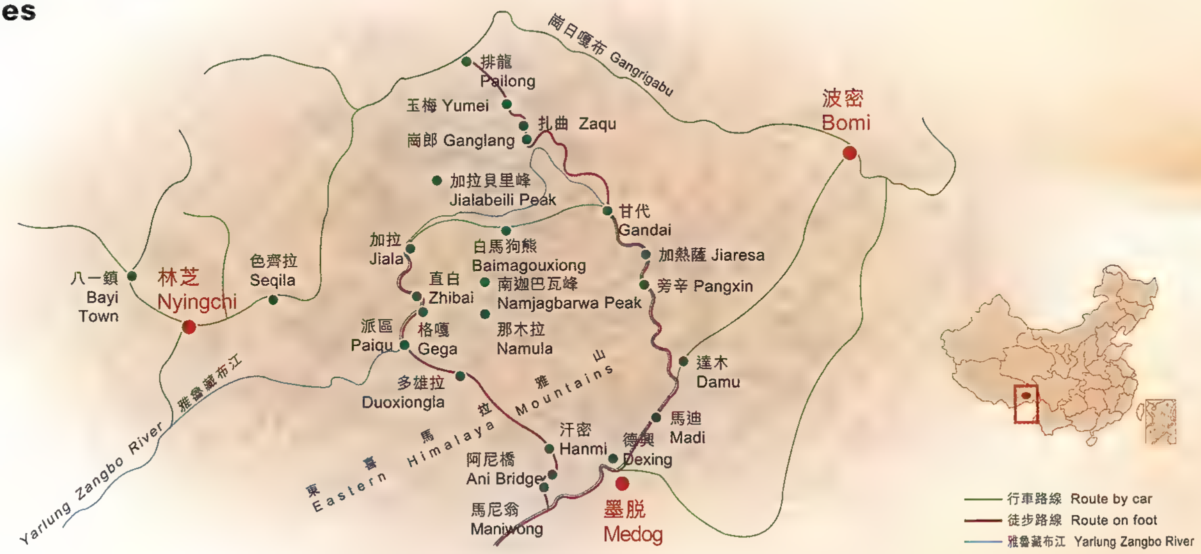
In many ways, life in the canyon remains primitve.

On the Yarlung Zangbo River banks my three geologist companions discovered blocks of eclogites, a kind of metamorphic rock crystallised under high temperature and pressure in the transitional belt between earth's crust and mantle. This is further evidence that the great Qinghai–Tibet Plateau is truly a cross section of the earth's crustal structure. Namjagbarwa is in fact an important place to study the crustal structure of Tibet, and the entire globe — a great geologist's workshop.

Translated by Ling Yuan

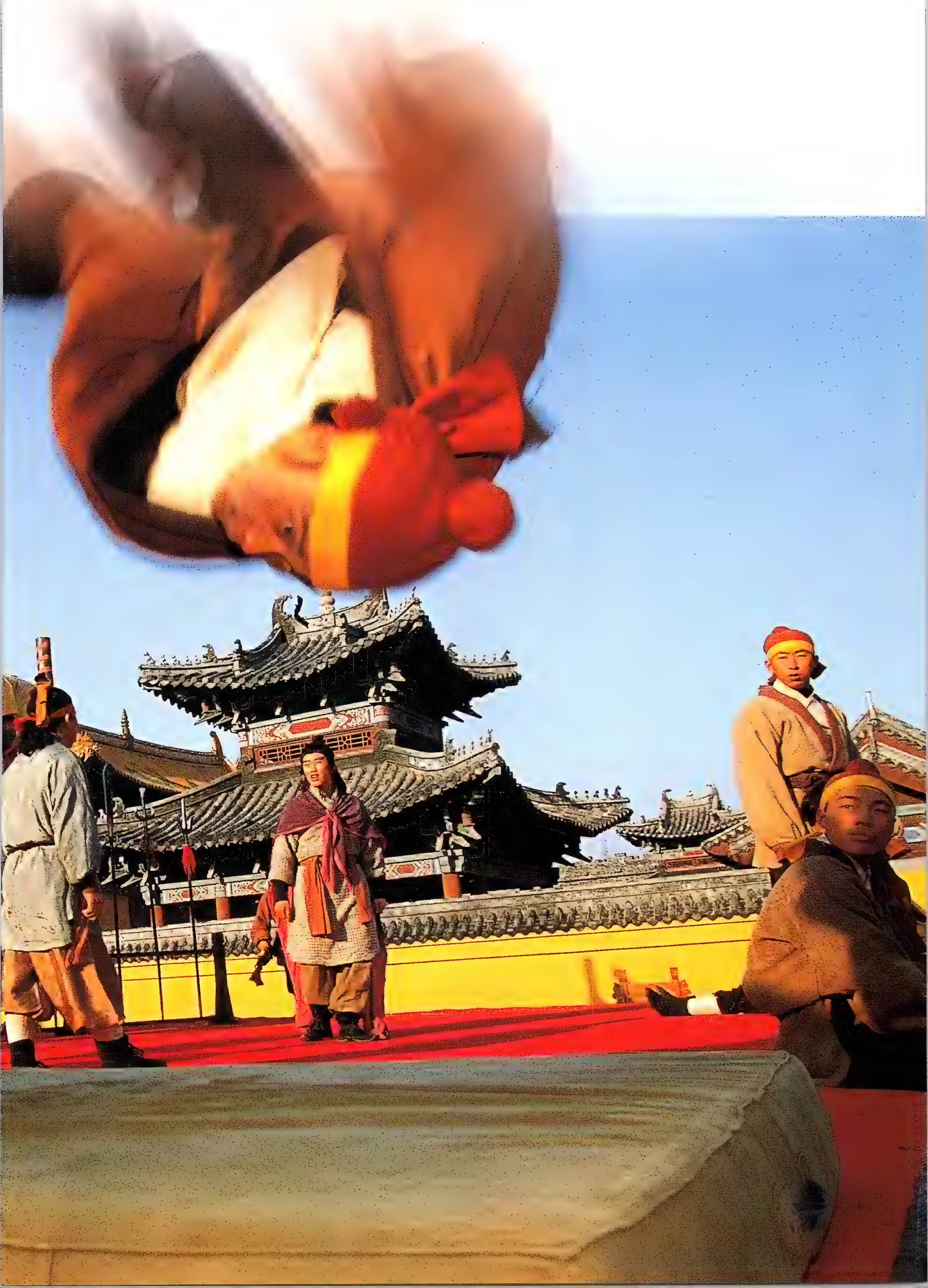
1. The Namjagbarwa Peak (by Zeng Chengdong)
2. The frozen Duoxiongla River

野外徒步考察路線圖
Sketch Map of Field Trip Routes


崗日嘎布 Gangrigabu
排龍 Pailong
玉梅 Yumei
扎曲 Zaqu
崗郎 Ganglang
波密 Bomi
加拉貝里峰 Jialabeili Peak
甘代 Gandai
加拉 Jiala
白馬狗熊 Baimagouxiong
加熱薩 Jiaresa
八一鎮 Bayi Town
林芝 Nyingchi
色齊拉 Seqila
直白 Zhibai
南迦巴瓦峰 Namjagbarwa Peak
旁辛 Pangxin
派區 Paiqu
格嘎 Gega
那木拉 Namula
多雄拉 Duoxiongla
達木 Damu
雅魯藏布江
Yarlung Zangbo River
東喜馬拉雅山
Eastern Himalaya Mountains
汗密 Hanmi
馬迪 Madi
德興 Dexing
阿尼橋 Ani Bridge
馬尼翁 Maniwong
墨脱 Medog
行車路線 Route by car
徒步路線 Route on foot
雅魯藏布江 Yarlung Zangbo River

IN THE WORLD OF 'OUTLAWS OF THE MARSH'

Photos by Xie Guanghui Article by Huang Beihong



Picture yourself in the middle of an ongoing movie, and then another, and another.... That's what you will find here at this set for the *Outlaws of the Marsh* where the adventures of these historic outlaws are re-enacted daily. This classic Chinese novel tells the tales of rebels fighting against an oppressive government, and championing the cause of the poor and downtrodden.

A few years ago, a CCTV nationally televised program called *The Three Kingdoms*, based on the Chinese classic of the same title, resulted in a craze for features of that time period. CCTV has now built another studio set at Taihu Lake – the Outlaws of the Marsh City. Recently, I had a chance to go to this new tourist resort near Wuxi. There, I not only saw but experienced episodes of the outlaws' story, such as Wu Song battling a tiger with his bare hands; Ximen Qing flirting with the luscious Pan Jinlian, Wu Song's sister-in-law; and the Liangshan rebel troops commanded by Song Jiang attacking Gaotang Prefecture government.

This studio town on the outskirts of Wuxi encompasses about 39 hectares of land and 100 hectares of water in a typical southern China garden. The general layout is in four sections: the capital city, prefecture and county towns, the Liangshan Mountain base, and the lake.

SECTION 1 A STEP BACK IN TIME TO THE ANCIENT CAPITAL

Entering the Song-dynasty capital, one immediately senses the prosperity. The palace buildings are incredibly authentic and the Great Xiangguo Temple looks as real as its namesake in Kaifeng. Other places named in the novel are all genuinely depicted. There is the residence of Gao Qiu, the sinister prime minister, the crowded Fanlou Restaurant, and the courtesans' quarter in the imperial street where Emperor Huizong met and enjoyed himself with the famous prostitute Li Shishi.

A favourite spot for visitors is the street called "Qingming Festivities by the River", which has been built to illustrate a very famous ancient painting entitled the same name in a long horizontal scroll, depicting the prosperity and the lives of the common people 1,000 years ago. Both sides of the street are lined with numerous workshops, shopping stalls and tea houses, all expressing unique Chinese traditions and culture of that period. Even the shop signboards seem to have been made long ago, and match well the Hongqiao Bridge across the Bianhe River. Walking along this street, everyone can imagine themselves as ancient people – drink a cup of famous tea, taste local delicacies, watch a puppet show or practise archery on the imperial exercise ground.

One can also go to the exhibition in the residence of Gao Qiu where there is a large collection of materials related to the "Qingming Festivities" painting and many other paintings and calligraphic works by renowned artists of different historical periods. Another pleasure for visitors is to browse through the unique folk handicrafts for sale.

SECTION 2 WATCH THE OUTLAW-HEROES PERFORM

Moving into the prefecture and county district one can see immediately that this section is in fact abstracts of the stories in the novel *Outlaws in the Marsh*. In the so-called Zishi (Purple Stone) Street, there are the famous Lion's Tower, Blue Cloud Tower, Elder Brother Wu's Home, Old Woman Wang's Teahouse, Ximen Qing's Drugstore,

Previous page: In the City of Outlaws of the Marsh, an open traditional Chinese martial arts contest held every day makes visitors believe they have gone back in time.

1. **On average, three or four film or TV production groups work simultaneously here every day.**
2. **Most performers are highly skilled in traditional martial arts.**
3. **Artists of the Yangzhou Puppet Show Troupe perform "Wu Song Kills theTiger" all year round here.**
4. **Tourists browsing through the shopping centre in the scenic area.**
5. **The City of Outlaws of the Marsh has become a favourite section for visitors.**

Zhu Gui's Wine Shop, Xunyang Pavilion, Residence of Military Commander Zhang, Shijie Village and the Execution Ground – all places mentioned in the novel and presented on screen. Visitors who have read the novel or viewed the TV series will be able to recognise the place where Pan Jinlian first met and flirted with Ximen Qing; the street where the Elder Brother Wu hawked his sesame cakes; and the site where Wu Song killed Ximen Qing to avenge his elder brother's death.

Wandering around a while, visitors will be quickly immersed in the world of the Liangshan rebel heroes. All of a sudden, the battle cry comes from a city gate and the Liangshan troops put up ladders to force their entry into the city. Knives and swords are everywhere, with soldiers fighting either on foot or horseback — a very real ancient battleground experience. The story in the novel happens like this: Li Kui, one of the

outlaws nicknamed Black Whirlwind, killed the bad guy Yin Tianxi, nephew of the local governor. Then, Chai Jin, a rich, noble man who had befriended the Liangshan heroes, was imprisoned by the local governor Gao Lian, to avenge his nephew's death. To rescue Chai Jin, Song Jiang led the Liangshan army into Gaotang and captured Gao Lian. Chai Jin was saved and, thankful, he also joined the rebel forces.

This story unfolds on Zishi Street: Elder Brother Wu and his wife Pan Jinlian are selling sesame seed cakes, while Wu Song, the younger brother, has just killed a man-eating tiger and is thus given a hero's welcome. He passes by on a big horse. His elder brother sees him and tells everyone that Wu Song is his younger brother, which no one believes is possible. As they all laugh at him, Wu Song quickly dismounts and prostrates himself in front of his brother. Thus ends the performance of "The Meeting of the Brothers".

Other performances such as "Yan Qing Challenges His Rivals in a Martial Arts Contest" and "Yang Zhi Sells His Sword" may also suddenly appear in front of visitors as they walk around the set.

SECTION 3 THE ROAD TO LIANGSHAN

The Liangshan section, built on a mountain slope by Taihu Lake, includes 10 scenic spots around the mountain and on the water. Not only historic, it is also charmingly pretty. On the way to the top of Liangshan Mountain, visitors must first pass Zhu Gui's Wine Shop, a clandestine liaison stop for the Liangshan heroes, and Liangshan Port, the heroes' naval base, at the foot of the mountain. Anchored in the port now are 10 authentic Song boats, including Gao Qiu's official boat, imperial cargo ships, and battle ships. To get to the highest point, where the Assembly Hall is situated, from Liangshan Port, one has to pass through the Niutou Gate and Duanjin Pavilion, and then the Liangshan Parade Ground where one is struck by an imposing flagpole 12 metres high. The big orange banner of four big characters proclaims "Right wrongs in accordance with heaven's decree".

According to the novel, after the Liangshan heroes captured Gaotang, they put up notices to reassure the public and opened up the

1. Visitors can test their archery skills.
2. Performances based on stories in the novel are given every day.
3. The actor performing the role of Li Kui resembles the hero of the novel.
4. One of the outdoor scenes built at the CCTV studio.

official granaries to help the poor, thus winning the people's hearts. A big parade ground was paved in front of the fortress gate for the heroes to practise martial arts. Visitors can watch performances here.

SECTION 4 TAIHU LAKE BOAT TOUR

A boat tour can take the visitor to the many beautiful natural scenes, including the 72 peaks, by Taihu Lake.

On the banks of the lake there are more tourists spots out of the novel, such as the Xunyang Pavilion and Shijie Village.

Translated by Li Zhenguo

Tips for the Traveller

Transport: There are buses going to the City of the Outlaws of the Marsh from Wuxi. The journey takes about half an hour. **Admission Fee:** 60 yuan per person. **Hours:** 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

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1. The "Outlaws of the Marsh" town built on the banks of the Taihu Lake
2. Visitors are most interested in the character Pan Jinlian.
3. Buildings with glazed tiles resemble those in the Forbidden City of Beijing.
4. A good time is had by all.
5. One of the sets where the audience can mingle with the actors.

EXQUISITE YENGISAR KNIVES

Photos by Shi Baoxiu Article by Zhi Lang

Every time I went for an outing, I would bring along my Swiss army knife, just in case. I never knew when I would need it for cutting up food or, in rare cases, to defend myself. Now, however, I have switched to this great pocket knife I discovered from Yengisar.

Great Shape, Superb Design

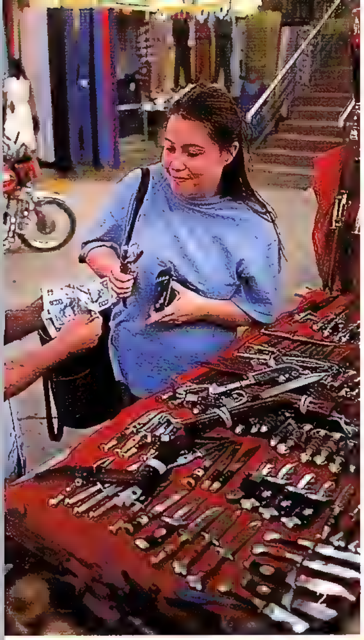
The Yengisar Pocket Knife, one of the four famous brands made in Xinjiang, takes its name from the county at the western edge of the Tarim Basin where it is produced. Yengisar County has always been well-known for its traditional arts and crafts, and especially for its pocket knives. This little knife is really quite extraordinary – elegant in shape, ornate in decoration and unmatched sharpness of blade. My own knife is a perfect example. It is made in an "S" shape, its handle is inlaid with sapphire; the sheath is silver with the beautiful trade mark. The great shape and superb design of this Yengisar knife explains why I switched.

Quality Workmanship

Once a quality commodity becomes well known, copies will always appear, so it is important to be able to tell the difference. Here are five features to check for the real product:

First – workmanship All Yengisar knives are made razor sharp and resonant through particular processes by skilled craftsmen. The best spring steel is chosen to make a rough base, then it is tempered into the finished product and quenched to harden. Quenching – cooling hot metal by plunging into cold water – is an unique skill a craftsman must acquire.

Usually this skill is handed down to family members only, seldom is it taught to outsiders. A knife quenched by an experienced master is



extremely hard and sharp; it cuts iron like butter. Cutting into an iron rod, the shavings will fly but the knife blade will not dent or break.

Tap the knife and listen for the resonance of the ring; it should last for about half a minute. This may sound like an old wife's tale but it is actually a true test of quality.

Second – the shape A typical Yengisar knife has a pointed tip with the rear body curved backwards and the lower part of the handle curved forward creating an "S" shape. This type of knife is a favourite of the Uygurs. Twelve other types of knives are produced, including curved, straight, arrow and dove types in small, medium and large sizes.

Third – the handle Handles come in many different shapes and bear various characteristic designs and patterns in copper, silver, jade, bone, and gems; some are riveted. The most precious ones are inlaid with pure silver or gemstones; the most common ones are with simply coloured glass, fashionable as well as cheap.

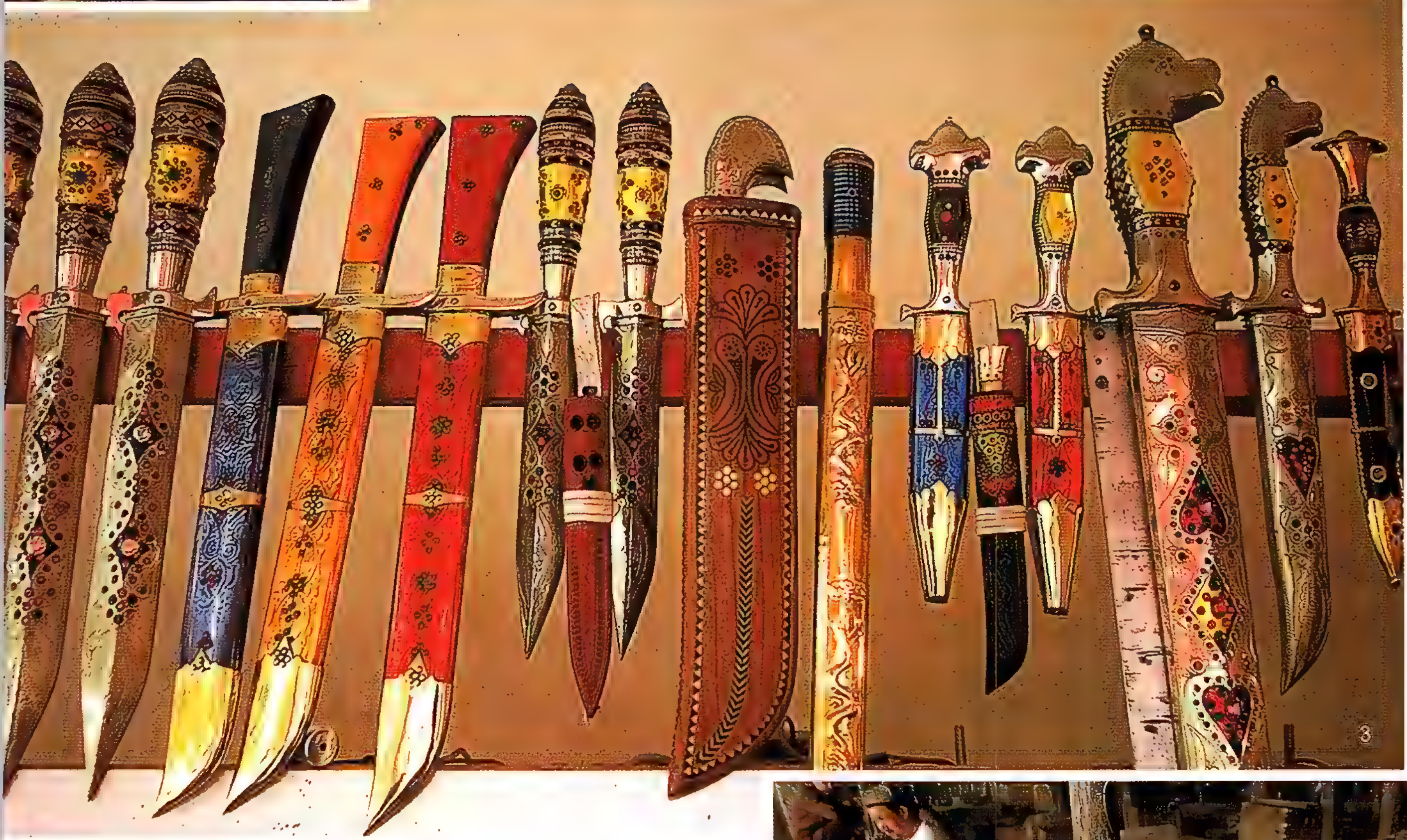
Fourth – the sheath Experienced craftsmen make the sheath to fit the knife's shape perfectly. They first make it in wood and then cover it with cowhide or sheepskin. The leather covers are etched with patterns and dyed. Sheaths made of silver, copper and aluminium are the most valuable.

Fifth – the trade mark Knives produced in the Yengisar County Knife Factory always carry their trade mark, two badanmu flowers inlaid against one another, on the handle. Recently, both the Uygur and Chinese characters for "Yengisar" are imprinted on the knife.

Yengisar pocket knives are sold by street vendors everywhere. Generally, the price ranges from 10 to 40 yuan each.

Translated by Xiong Zhenru

1. Inside a Yengisar Knife store
2. Buying an unusual souvenir
3. Yengisar knives with exquisite handles and sheaths
4. Craftsmen showing their knife-sharpening skills



Ancient Temple Renovated, Mt. Emei

A famous Ming-dynasty temple on Mount Emei, one of China's four sacred Buddhist mountains, is being renovated. The Big Buddha Temple used to be the gateway to Mount Emei. When the project is completed in 2003, it will become the largest temple in Southwest China, and will serve as a centre for training Buddhist monks and conducting religious activities. The temple will house a Buddhist college, a library, and a replica of a bronze Budhisattva image with a thousand hands and a thousand eyes made in the Ming Dynasty.

More International Air Routes

The number of China's international air routes will increase from the current 106 to 124 by July this year, according to the Civil Aviation Administration of China. Among the new routes are: Beijing-Hiroshima with an intermediate stop in Dalian by Air China, China Southern Airlines' Guangzhou-Xiamen-Kuala Lumpur line, and 16 others linking China with Japan, Mongolia, the Philippines, Malaysia, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and two with Macao. A total of 54 airlines from 41 counties are engaged in international passenger and freight transport in China.

Great Wall Ruins, Inner Mongolia

Ruins of a section of the Great Wall built more than 2,200 years ago have been found in the Yinshan Mountains in North China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. The wall, five to six metres high and three metres wide, winds through the mountains from east to west for more than 200 kilometres. Experts believe that it was built in the Qin Dynasty (221-206 B.C.).

Top Ten Archaeological Findings

Ten of the 479 archaeological projects carried out in 1997 have been listed as top discoveries of the year. Among them are: the world's oldest rice paddy dating back 6,500 years; an imperial summer resort and bathhouse dating back more than 2,000 years; more than 100 tombs along the ancient Silk Road; stoneware items dating back 300,000 years; dwellings from the Neolithic Age dating back at least 7,700 years; a burial mound site and 149 tombs with a history of 5,000-6,000 years; and a Hong Kong housing complex and 20 tombs dated between the Neolithic and Early Bronze ages.

Building of 4,000 Years Old, Jiangsu

Some 100,000-square-metre ruins of 4,000-year-old buildings were found in Yunzhong, a town in northeastern Jiangsu. Surprisingly, archaeologists discovered that the construction of the great antiquity is similar to that of modern houses, though they belonged to the Longshan Culture.

Silk Road Pipeline, Xinjiang

Along the ancient Silk Road, a 3,000-kilometre "oil road" will be built from Karamay in Northwest China's Xinjiang to Khazakstan. The pipeline, which will cost US$2.3 billion and take eight years to complete, is expected to transport 25 million tons of oil annually. The pipeline's domestic section, starting at Korla, north of the Tarim Desert, will run through Lanzhou, capital of Gansu Province, to reach Central China's Henan Province and Southwest China's Sichuan Province. So far, 428 kilometres of the pipeline, from Korla to Shanshan within Xinjiang, has been completed.

World Heritage List, Beijing

Two more historical sites, the Summer Palace and the Temple of Heaven, both in Beijing, will hopefully be added to the UNESCO's World Heritage List. The Chinese government has made its application and experts from the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation will soon inspect the two sites. The Summer Palace, built during the Qing Dynasty, is China's largest imperial garden. It attracts 40-50 million tourists a year. The Temple of Heaven was where the emperors of the Ming and Qing held sacrificial ceremonies to pray for a good harvest. Covering an area of 273 hectares, the temple was built in 1420 during the Ming Dynasty.

Manjusri Statue to Be Moved from Dalian

The world's largest bronze statue of Manjusri, a boddhisattva, is to be moved from Dalian in Northeast China's Liaoning Province to Wutai Mountain in North China's Shanxi Province. The statue is 12.8 metres tall and weighs 60 tons. Wutai Mountain, one of China's most famous Buddhist mountains, is believed to be the home of Manjusri. The setting up of the statue will be part of the Ninth International Tourism Festival to be held at Wutai Mountain this year.

Ancient Station Restored, Beijing

Restoration of an ancient relay station found in a Beijing suburban county, Yanqing, is underway. The station, covering an area of 162,000 square metres, is believed to be built during the Yuan Dynasty for couriers to get fresh mounts and rest. Included in this historical site is also a 600-metre section of the ancient city wall. A number of cultural relics have also been discovered, including stone stables and pillars.

Mainland to Boost Hong Kong Tourism

Squeezed by Asia's economic woes, many travellers from the region have steered clear of Hong Kong. As a result, revenues from Hong Kong's tourism industry have plummeted, affecting a series of business sectors, such as restaurants, hotels, airlines and retailers. Fearing an influx of people from the mainland, Chinese nationals have restricted entry into Hong Kong. Now, to help save Hong Kong's tourism industry, some restrictions will be lifted. The demand for travelling abroad has been steadily rising in China, and about 2.3 million people visited Hong Kong in each of the past couple of years. People in Hong Kong's tourism industry are hoping that numbers can rise sharply.

Visitor arrivals fell 11.1 percent while tourism receipts sank 14.7 percent in 1997, to 10.4 million people and US$9.3 billion respectively. January this year saw a further 24.6 percent decrease in arrivals, compared with the same period of last year.

New Air Routes

China Northern Airline based in Shenyang, capital of Northeast China's Liaoning Province, offered 12 new air routes since the end of March. The five new international routes include four to Japan and one linking Beijing and Pyongyang, capital of the People's Democratic Republic of Korea. The other seven routes are domestic ones. The airline company also plans to add flights linking Northeast China cities and Seoul, Korea.

Meanwhile, Air France has announced that its flights from Paris to Shanghai have been resumed, two per week at present and three per week beginning in September this year. Its Paris-Beijing flights will also increase from four to five a week in September.

New Hot Spring Found, Beijing

A new hot spring has been discovered in Gaoliying Town in Shunyi, a suburban county in eastern part of Beijing. The spring water, at about 46°C, contains 55 kinds of mineral substances essential for human health. A hot spring resort is under construction and will open to tourists in October.

Huge Greenhouse, Beijing

The Chinese capital is planning to set up a greenhouse of 8,000 square metres of floor space. The greenhouse, located at the foot of the Fragrant Hills in the western suburbs of Beijing, will include a number of exhibition rooms for variouse flowers and plants, including seasonal, tropical, desert and rare. It will be equipped with advanced technological systems for temperature control, ventilation, cleaning and watering.

Biyong Hall Opens to Public, Beijing

Biyong Hall, the main structure of the Imperial College, known as Guozijian, opened to public in spring. The magnificent hall was built in 1784 during the reign of Emperor Qianlong in the Qing Dynasty. It was the place where emperors gave lectures on the Chinese classics. When an emperor was enthroned, he would first pay homage to the Confucius Temple, then go to Guozijian to give a short speech on Confucianism or other Chinese classics on traditional Chinese thought. Covering an area of 310 square metres, Biyong Hall is square in shape, 17.6 metres in length and width, and 20 metres in height. Besides a tablet carved with the hall's name in the handwriting of Emperor Qianlong, his inscriptions and those of another Qing-dynasty emperor, Daoguang, are hung at the hall entrance.

Secrets of Ancient Concubines, Xi'an

A team of Chinese and Japanese archaeologists is to uncover the secrets of part of Guigong Palace, a complex where imperial concubines lived during the Western Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-24 A.D.). Xi'an (called Chang'an then) was the capital of Western Han Dynasty. Excavation of the palace ruins has started with archaeologists from both the Institute of Archaeology of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and the Nara National Cultural Properties Research Institute working together.

Historical records show that the palace complex, which was built by the Han emperor Wudi, was famous for its unique architecture and gorgeous decoration. One of the buildings, the Mingguang Hall, was decorated with gold, jade, and pearls that made it glow even at night. The ruins, located northwest of Xi'an, cover an area of 36 square kilometres, 50 times the size of the Forbidden City in Beijing.

International Fair in Yantai, Shandong

An international fair will be held in October in Yantai, a coastal city in East China's Shandong Province. By sponsoring the Second APEC International Small/Medium Enterprises Technology Exchange and Fair (MITEC'98), members of the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation will show their unity while seeking understanding and support from all over the world. Asian countries in particular will indicate through the fair that they can cast off their temporary difficulties and revive the Asian economic miracle. APEC was established in 1989. Since the 21 members' population accounts for 42.5 percent of the world's total, the organisation plays a key role in the world economy. The concept of the fair has been warmly received by APEC members, and over 20,000 will participate in it. The fair is also expected to draw thousands of tourists.

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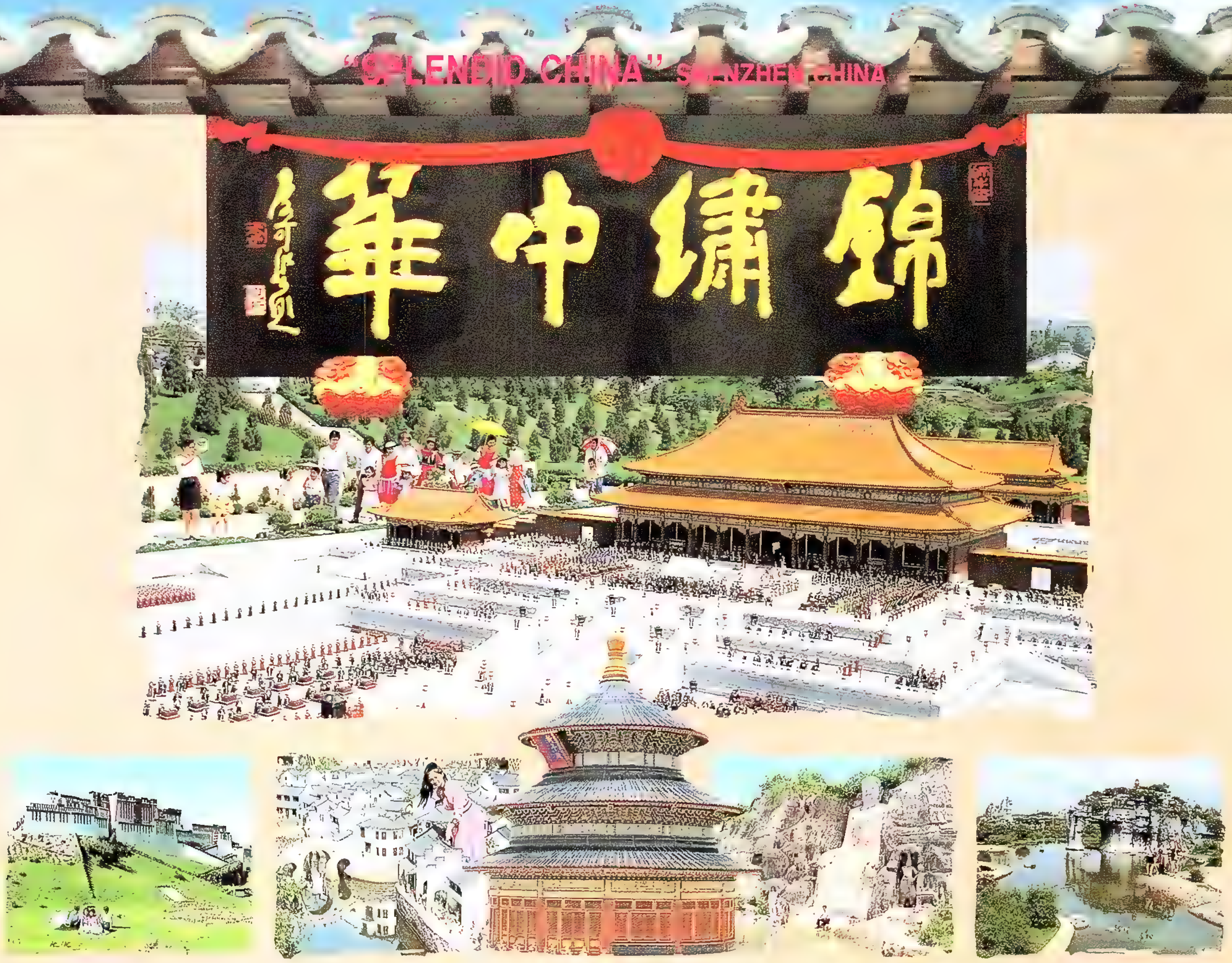

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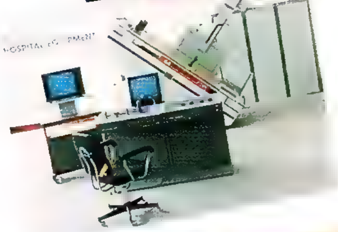

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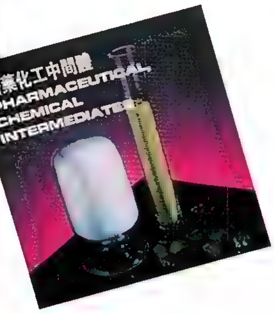
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1

FOSHAN

A RISING STAR IN THE PEARL RIVER DELTA

It is not a big city, either in terms of territory or population, yet its skyline, formed by over a hundred skyscrapers, gives the impression that it is nothing if not a world-famous metropolis. Foshan in the Pearl River Delta has the quality city life others have — high-tech industries, flourishing shopping centres, tourist attractions, and colourful recreational activities; and it also has things that many big cities do not have — thriving suburban towns, tranquil villages and a clean environment. It is recognised as one of the five cleanest cities in China.

Photos by Peng Zhenge, So Long Chi   *Article by Gloria Shang*

A Model City Listed by the UN

Located 16 kilometres from Guangzhou, capital of South China's Guangdong Province, and 231 kilometres from Hong Kong, Foshan distinguishes itself not only for its increasing prosperity (similar to other Pearl River Delta cities), but also for its urban planning and environmental protection. Under the city's administration are its urban area and three satellite cities, Nanhai, Shunde and Sanshui, as well as Gaoming County.

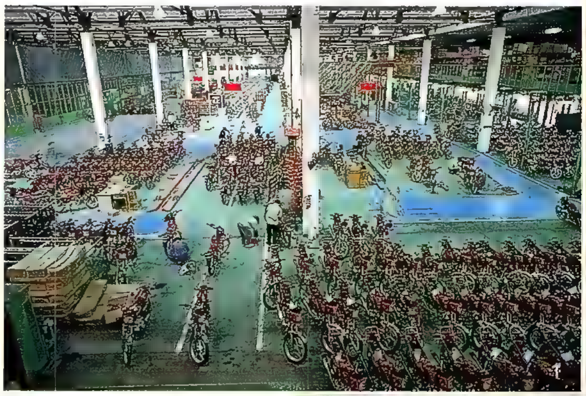
Driving through the city and its surrounding towns and villages, you will notice how densely inhabited its territory is — three million local residents, and another million temporary residents on just 3,814 square kilometres of land. But at the same time, you cannot help admiring the city planners for their excellent design. Only 430,000 people actually live in the urban region of Foshan, and rural residential buildings dotting the fields and hills remind you of tourist villas. The average living space in Foshan has reached 17 square metres per person, more than double other big cities! So it's no wonder the city has been listed as a model residential area by the United Nations.

Economics Based on Appliances

In terms of economic development, Foshan's general domestic production value reached 52 billion yuan in 1995. This makes it one of the 50 most powerful cities in China and one of the nation's seven cities which have reached the highest standards in social and economic development.

Sixty percent of Foshan's general industrial production comes from light industry, with electric appliances, textiles and building pottery as pillar industries. Many of its household electric products

1. Xiqiao Bridge (by Peng Zhenge)
2. A panoramic view of Foshan City (by So Long Chi)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are nation-wide famous brands also selling well abroad. These include Rongsheng refrigerator; Kelong, Huabao, Meidi, and Feilu air conditioners; cookers of the Aide and Xigui brands, and many others ranging from electric fans to microwave ovens. Foshan has become China's largest household electric appliances producer, with several varieties filling a major percentage of the nation's total production: microwave ovens, over 40 percent; electric cookers, 52 percent; and electric fans, 37 percent.

Foshan is also a soft drink producer with two of China's giant companies, Jianlibao and Qiangli, with headquarters in Sanshui, one of Foshan's satellite cities. They turn out more than half a million tons of juice and various soft drinks a year.

A Major Commercial Centre in History

Like an energetic and progressive youth, Foshan keeps changing and modernising. And while it is true that the city owes its prosperity to its quick development in the past two decades, Foshan is also an ancient city with a long history as a cultural and economic exchange centre.

Foshan means "Buddhist Hill" in Chinese. In the early years of the Eastern Jin Dynasty (317-420), monks from India and the Middle East arrived in Foshan, spreading Buddhism and building temples. In 628 during the Tang Dynasty, three bronze statues of Buddha were unearthed at Tapo Terrace (today's Tapo Street). Afterwards a stone tablet engraved with the characters "Buddhist Hill" marked this discovery, and ever since then the city has been known by this name.

Through later dynasties to the Tang (618-907), many people immigrated from the Central Plains, thus boosting Foshan's growing economy. By the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127), Foshan had developed into an important commercial centre and a port for foreign trade. In the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), Foshan became one of China's four major commercial towns, together with Jingdezhen in Jiangxi, Hankou (today part of Wuhan) in Hubei and Zhuxian in Henan. Later, during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), its importance increased to such heights that its name was associated with cities such as Beijing, Suzhou and Hankou. Before the Opium War, Foshan's population had increased to 600,000 and its manufacturing industry had expanded to cover more than 300 industries, including pottery, textiles, iron casting, pharmaceuticals, fireworks, umbrellas and folk handicrafts. In addition to the 18 representative offices of other provinces and cities, 23 foreign agencies were also established in Foshan. Meanwhile, Chinese products were shipped overseas to Southeast Asia, Australia and the Americas. At that time, Foshan was a commercial centre much more prosperous than Guangzhou.

Foshan has fostered quite a few famous reformers and revolutionaries in Chinese history. Among the most celebrated were: Kang Youwei, a reformer of the late Qing Dynasty who advocated changes in the feudal imperial system; Zhan Tianyou, an engineer who designed the first Chinese-built railway; and He Xiangning, a follower of Dr. Sun Yat-sen and an enthusiastic democratic revolutionary. Therefore, it is not by chance that the Foshan people are again found in the forefront of reform. Foshan people are confident that, by 2005, their modernisation will be complete.

Beijing
Xi'an
Shanghai
FOSHAN
Hong Kong

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS OF FOSHAN

Foshan's rich cultural background and the city's current thriving economy are an open invitation to tourists. To further this interest, many historical sites, now under protection, have been restored, and new scenic areas and recreation facilities have also been developed.

Zumiao (Ancestors') Temple

Located in Foshan's city centre, the temple was first built during the 1078-1085 period in the Northern Song Dynasty, and was rebuilt in 1372 in the Ming Dynasty. After undergoing two dozen or so renovations, the temple's numerous stately buildings serve today as a reflection of the traditional and southern Chinese architectural styles of different periods. A 2.5-kilogram bronze statue of the Northern Emperor, cast in the Ming Dynasty, stands gracefully among other cultural relics exhibited in the temple. There are also 24 painted Buddhist sculptures over two metres tall.

Liangyuan Garden

Located at Songfeng Road in Foshan, this enormous garden was built 170 years ago by a Qing-dynasty official Liang Airu and his three nephews to symbolise their good fortune. With exquisite buildings, unusual rocks, lucid waters and a big collection of calligraphic works, it has been popularly known as one of the four most famous gardens in Guangdong. Restoration work has been under way since the 1980s, and now 21,260 square metres of garden is open to public.

Qinghui Garden

Another of the four famous Guangdong gardens, Qinghui Garden is located in Daliang Town in Shunde. Also built during the Qing Dynasty, it covers an area of 1.2 hectares, with a total of 66 residential rooms. The garden has exceptional character, with ponds and pavilions built on the waterside, linked with gorgeously decorated corridors. A major group of houses, called Boat Hall, is built in the shape of a traditional southern-style boat. The garden supports many ancient plants and precious species of flowers.

Xiqiao Mountain

Situated 27 kilometres from Foshan's city proper, Xiqiao Mountain, comprises 72 peaks, 36 caves, 208 springs and 28 waterfalls. In addition to its sensational natural scenery, many man-made attractions and tourist facilities have also been built, such as the Tianhu Lake Water-Screen Movie Theatre, the Southern Sea Guanyin Culture Garden, and the 2001 Pingsha Science and Technology Museum.

Southern State Peach Orchard

Located in the land of peaches in Songgang Town of Nanhai, the orchard, dotted with clear ponds and odd rocks, spreads out over six square kilometres. Every spring, when the peach trees are in full bloom, this vast area comes alive like an ocean of brilliant pink waves. An amusement park, a country club, a water playground, a children's park, and a series of other entertainment facilities have established this area as an ideal holiday resort.

Jinsha (Golden-Sand) Beach

An immense natural sand beach, near Jinsha Town on the lower reaches of Northern River, Jinsha beach has an adjacent 20,000-square-metre bamboo grove, which contains barbecue grounds, villas, an out-door theatre, and a sports centre.

Sanshui Forest Park

This park, developed in 1992 in the northern suburb of Sanshui, contains many newly constructed attractions, including the giant Sleeping Buddha, Han and Tibetan Buddhist Culture Hall, Crocodile Lake, Thousand-Buddha Hill and Vegetarian Hall. It will be developed into a holiday resort featuring Buddhist culture alongside natural scenery.

Nanfeng and Dagangshan Ancient Kilns

Foshan's long history of pottery and porcelain production is authenticated by a couple of ancient kilns remaining in the area.

CITY

1. **POSTI – a joint-venture motorcycle producer (by So Long Chi)**
2. **Boat racing in Shunde (by Chan Yat Nin)**
3. **Fish ponds in Nanhai (by Peng Zhenge)**
4. **Birds' paradise in Nanhai (by Peng Zhenge)**
5. **With more income, the people of Foshan prefer to spend more for a better life. (by Peng Zhenge)**

Nanfeng (Southern Wind) Ancient Kiln, in Shiwan District of Foshan, was built in the Ming Dynasty and has been used for the past 400 years. The kiln, built on a terrace, is 33 metres long by two metres high, and is quite famous for its huge flower pots.

Ruins of a Tang-dynasty kiln can be found on the Riverside Road in Gaoming Town. Various pieces of Tang-style porcelain of remarkable archaeological value have been excavated here. Both kilns are listed as important cultural relics protected by the Guangdong provincial government.

Linggui (Spiritual Turtle) Tower

This typical Ming-dynasty tower is located on the banks of Western River in Gaoming Town. Standing 32 metres tall, the seven-storey, octagonal tower is built of brick and wood. Its base is surrounded by quiet trails, pavilions and barbecue grounds. From the top of the tower, one can have a panoramic view of the rippling river, fish ponds and fields.

Nightlife

Foshan Musical Spring is an unusual night-club, equipped with a small pond of dancing waters — over 500 nozzles send out streams of water, with changing colours and patterns to the accompaniment of music. Other facilities include karaoke rooms, a ball room and disco floor.

BUDDHIST

Urban District Cultural Centre has a theatre, an entrepreneurs' club, karaoke rooms, billiards room, bar, and Chinese and Western restaurants.

Foshan International Golf Club

Between Dali and Luocun villages in Nanhai, this club has an international-standard 18-hole golf course and a practice ground. Its enormous clubhouse is built in a blend of Chinese and Western architecture. The club is also equipped with a gymnasium, table tennis room, bar and tennis courts.

For Your Reference

How to Get There

Foshan is linked by freeway with Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Zhanjiang, Zhuhai, Hong Kong, and Macau. There are six passenger boats sailing between Foshan and Hong Kong and Macau, and connections directly with Guangzhou and Zhanjiang by railway. Sixteen airlines connect Foshan with cities such as Beijing, Yinchuan, Jinan, Nanjing and Hangzhou.

Where to Stay

Foshan Hotel **** Tel: 335 3338 Fax: 335 2347
Add: 75 Fenjiang Road South Postcode: 528000
Shunde Xianquan Hotel **** Tel: 229 3333 Fax: 229 2222
Add: Shunfeng Mountain Tourist Area, Shunde Postcode: 528300
Foshan Overseas Tower *** Tel: 222 3828 Fax: 222 7702
Add: 14 Zumiao Road, Foshan Postcode: 528000
Xiqiaoshan Hotel *** Tel: 688 6799 Fax: 688 2292
Add: Xiqiao Mountain, Nanhai Postcode: 528211
Little Penglai Hotel ** Tel: 665 5099
Add: 6 Penglai Road, Beigao Town, Shunde Postcode: 528311

Local Delicacies

Fried Milk: A Foshan creation. Milk is first mixed with egg white, fried ham and barbecued pork, then lightly fried in peanut oil. Served with fried bean noodles on top.

Zhuhou Sauce: Named after the Qing-dynasty chef who first prepared it. It is a tasty dressing made of fermented wheat flour, with sugar and sesame oil. It is the ingredient of many original dishes — Zhuhou Chicken, Zhuhou Goose, Zhuhou Eel, etc.

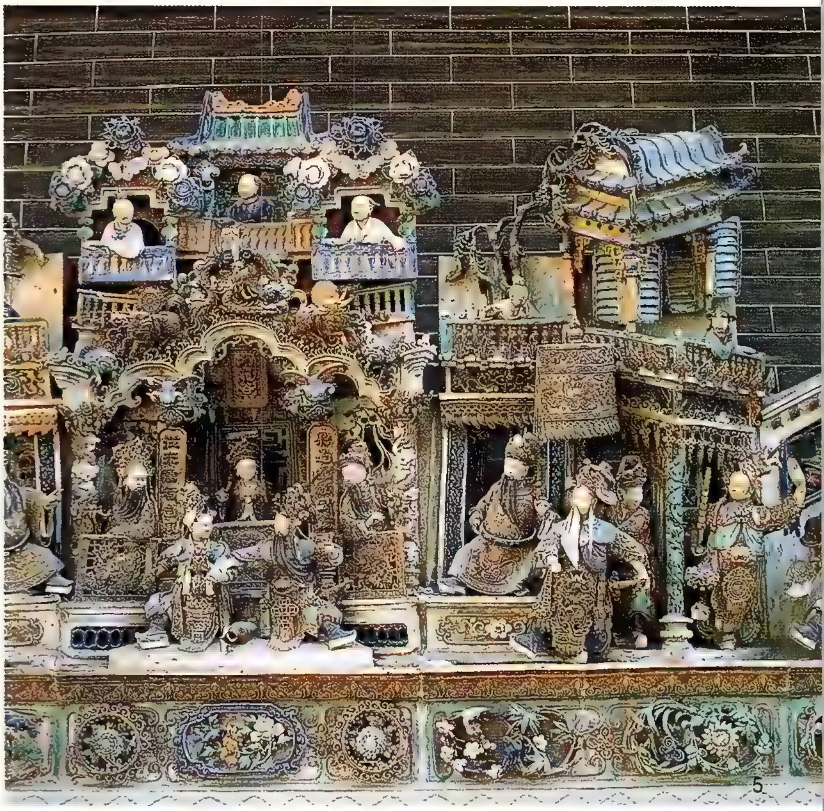
Pig's Feet: Stewed pig's feet, lean, tender and savoury, preserved in jars. The best place to taste this dish is Dexinzhai Restaurant in Foshan.

Sanshui fresh-water seafood: An abundance of seafood, like fish and shrimps, comes from Sanshui, where three rivers converge. Local produce flavours many dishes, for example, Jinhua sea eel, white baked shrimps, steamed Shanli fish with black-bean sauce, steamed Jinbian sole, etc.

Folklore

Guangdong Opera: Foshan is the origin of Yueju, Guangdong Opera. During the Yongzheng reign of Qing Dynasty, a famous Peking Opera singer, Zhang Wu, fled to Foshan and began teaching local people Peking Opera and Kunqu Opera. The songs eventually combined with the local dialect and southern Chinese music, and emerged as a new opera. Foshan Youth Guangdong Opera Troupe is one of China's famous Guangdong Opera institutes.

Qiuse (Autumn Colours): Started during the Ming Dynasty to celebrate the harvest season in autumn. Colourful parades are held in the evening, with people gathering to show off their lanterns, paper figures, fire dragons and acrobatic skills.



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世界第一大卧佛开光大典

6

Local Specialities

Iron Wok: Foshan has a long history of wok casting. During the Ming Dynasty, Foshan woks were used as imperial gifts for foreign envoys.

Pottery and Porcelain: In addition to daily utensils and artistic works, Foshan also produces a wide variety of pottery and porcelain for gardens and interior decoration.

Sister Cities: Foshan — Itami, Japan; Foshan — Port Louis, Mauritius; Foshan — Stockton, California, USA; Nanhai — Reno, Nevada, USA.

Major Travel Service

Foshan China Travel Service: Tel: (757) 223 9428 Fax: (757) 222 7625
Add: 14 Zumiao Road, Foshan Postcode: 528000

Weather

Foshan's weather is generally subtropical, with a long summer and short spring and fall. The average yearly temperature is 21°C–22°C and average yearly rainfall is 1,600–2,000 mm.

1. Leisure time in Shunde (by Peng Zhenge)
2. In the lobby of Foshan Hotel (by So Long Chi)
3. Young people of Sanshui enjoying themselves at a bar (by Shi Baoxiu)
4. Foshan offers tourists rich nightlife (by So Long Chi)
5. Pottery handicrafts produced in Foshan (by Yang Yao Tong)
6. The world's biggest Sleeping Buddha in Sanshui (by Chan Yat Nin)

THE LOTUS COUPLE

Photos by Hua Kai
Article by Yu Gong & Hua Kai

The "Lotus Couple" are a husband and wife team in Wuhan, capital of Hubei Province. Wang Qichao and Zhang Xingyan, both graduates of the Central China Agricultural Institute, have devoted their careers to the study of lotuses. For over four decades, this couple, who were classmates back in college, have lived through frustrations and joys to enter a beautiful world that few others have the fortune to experience — breeding top-quality lotuses.

1. **The lotus experts check plant growth daily.**
2. **The nobility and elegance of lotus flowers are best expressed in the twilight. (by Lin Nuhou)**
3. **Happy Reunion, a combination of Chinese and Japanese species**
4. **The lotus is often used as a symbol of purity. (by Lin Nuhou)**
5. **A species introduced from Japan – Tangzhao Temple Lotus**
6. **The Lotus Garden in the East Lake Park in Wuhan**

A Lotus for Every Home

Among the many varieties of lotus species cultivated by the "Lotus Couple", the most common one is none other than the Little Angel. When we first saw this lotus grown in pots, we were really surprised. Weren't all lotuses grown in lakes and ponds? How could they grow in pots on the balcony? Our host informed us that this was one of the new breeds. It loves sunshine and hates shade and darkness. At the most, it can be kept inside for only one day, then must be placed out in the sun. The flower's graceful shape and bright colours have won it a place of honour in the homes of many families in Wuhan.

In fact, the first potted lotus appeared during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). To improve and popularise this rare ancient breed, the couple brought some from Xiamen in southeastern China to do extensive studies of the effects of hybridisation on changes in the flower's colours. Through many selection and elimination processes, they finally cultivated the Little Angel characterised by its smaller size but more flowers, as well as its early blooming.

Now some 80,000 of this breed of potted lotus are sold in the Chinese market annually. Out of this, one-eighth come from the Lotus Study Centre that the couple run, bringing in about 80,000 yuan in income. This in turn provides funding for further study and research of the flower at the centre.

Last summer, we met this 70-year-old couple in a three-room apartment of the Dongting Residential Area near the East Lake Scenic Zone in Wuhan. At

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first glance, we found their living room rather small and plainly furnished, with old furniture and desks occupying almost half the space. The small TV set was the only piece of modern technology in the room. To us, the plainness of the room did not at all reflect the position and achievement of the couple.

Taking a closer look around the room we quickly realised that the term plainness was not applicable; instead we discovered the room had a special atmosphere of its own. The wall lamps, for example, had glass shades in the shape of lotus petals, reflecting the artistic taste of the hosts. The subject of flowers, mostly lotus, featured strongly in the books from both China and abroad. A painting on the wall facing the door appropriately featured twin lotus flowers on the same stem, adding grace to the room. On this painting there was also a poem which roughly read: "A couple's devotion brings out potted flowers, more elegant and beautiful than my painted flowers. Their new species catch attention far and wide, bringing colour and fragrance to thousands of houses." The painting and calligraphy were apparently the work of the octogenarian painter and professor, Wu Shi. The double blossoms symbolise the couple while the poem directly praises them for their dedication and achievement.

Over a cup of green tea, our hosts related the story of their studies and research. From the 1950s to 1993, they collected and sorted out 75 different species of lotus plants and cultivated 125 new species. In the last five years, they brought the figure up to 301 kinds. China now has the most breeds of lotus, a real floral treasure, and it is thanks to this couple.

Rewriting the History of Lotus

International lotus study circles held the theory that lotus originated in India. Scholars in China had their doubts but for years they could not prove their point. Even the 1979 edition of the most authoritative Chinese encyclopaedia *Ci Hai* inherited this claim. In the early 1980s, the couple learned that Professor Xu Ren of the Chinese Floral and Plant Institute had studied ancient plants in India in the 1940s and so, they travelled north to discuss the topic with him. Professor Xu, because of his advanced age, no longer entertained

guests at home to discuss academic studies, but could not resist this couple's stubborn eagerness to learn the truth.

The old professor told them two things. First, during his nine years in India, he had never come across any species of plant like the Chinese lotus. He said that even the lotus design at the seat of Buddha statues in India was very similar to the modern-day water lily. Second, he said that during one of his archaeological field trips to the Qaidam Basin in Northwest China's Xinjiang, he had discovered a fossil of a lotus leaf dating back more than 10 million years. The couple thought: Wasn't a 10 million-year-old lotus leaf fossil unearthed in China proof that the Chinese lotus was an indigenous plant?

They delved into the history of lotus cultivation in China, travelling far and wide. When they learned that slices of lotus root had been unearthed at the Mawangdui tomb in Hunan, they rushed to Changsha to investigate. When they heard that Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 220) bricks exhibited in Guihu Park in Xindu County, Sichuan Province, had patterns describing lotus-seed picking, they went there too. They studied a stone tablet carved with lotus flowers at the Flower Pond of Lingyan Hill in Wuxian County that was constructed over 2,000 years ago by Fu Chai, King of the State of Wu, for his beloved Lady Xi Shi. They dug up historical documents, searching for proof and collecting everything mentioning lotus. Years of hard work eventually paid off. Their book entitled *A Study of the Resources of Lotus in China*, published in August 1988, reveals that the Chinese lotus had its origin right here in China.

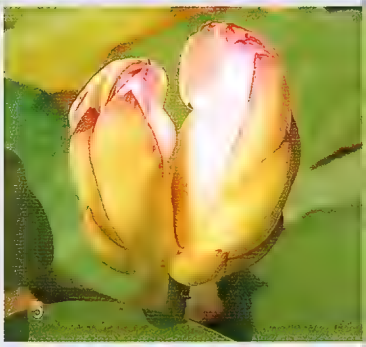
Introducing the Chinese Lotus to the World

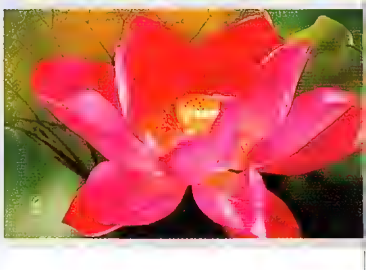
Professor Wang smiled when asked about their future plans. He did not answer our question but led us to their lotus pond, explaining extensively. The Ancient Chinese Lotus, the Sino-Japanese Friendship Lotus and the Sino-American Friendship Lotus struck us most with their unique petal shapes. We learned that the couple had used thousand-year-old lotus seeds unearthed in the Northeast China province of Liaoning to revive the breed, now called the Ancient Chinese Lotus. Overseas growers are also very interested in obtaining seeds or young plants from them.

In 1999, when Macao returns to China, lotus flower will become the image for the emblem and the flag of the new Macao Special Administrative Region. A large-scale lotus exhibition is being planned for 1999 to mark the event. Recently, Wang Qichao and Zhang Xingyan went to Macao with 200 new types of lotus they had cultivated, believing this to be a great opportunity to show off the Chinese lotus to the world.

In one of Wang and Zhang's photo albums, there is a picture of twin lotus blossoms on a single stem. They told us that the twin-blossom lotus like this was very rare – only one could be found among several thousand pots. Suddenly we saw the same truth in these human "twin blossoms".

Translated by F. Huang





1. **Professor Zhang teaching her students**
2. **Snow White, a species created by the couple**
3. **Professor Wang at work**
4. **Blossom from a thousand-year-old seed**
5. **Twin lotus flowers on one stem (by Wang Qichao)**
6. **Big Red Robe, a species cultivated in 1983**

SPECIALITIES

A World of Painted Clay Figurines

Photos & Article by Shan Xiaogang

先进单位
文明单位
信用卡
特约

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2

In Tianjin there is a shop called "Zhang's Clay Figurines", which specialises in the sale of painted clay figurines. Everyday, once the small shop opens for business, customers continually pour in. People from all walks of life, the elderly, young students, small children and [illegible] are drawn by these painted clay figurines [illegible].

Why?

This remarkable shop is easy to find in the Old Culture Street in Nankai District in Tianjin, at the western corner of the square in front of Tianhou Palace. Passing through its curtained door, you will find that colourful figurines, in different forms and styles, are displayed in the glass cupboards along its four walls. The colours and variety are so fascinating that you will be totally mesmerised.

When I entered the shop, I took a long look at the art works. Most were human figures based on the characters of the classical novel *A Dream of Red Mansions* and traditional operas, all vivid and entertaining. There was a short fat one and an old tall man that made me chuckle. Some of the figures were sculpted in sets and groups, all with superb craftsmanship.

While in the shop, I happened to see a group of students buying a comic dwarf as a birthday present for their schoolmate; surely the young student would be very happy with such an amusing present.

To get a better understanding of how these painted clay figurines are made, I paid a special visit to the Zhang's Clay Figurines studio located on Jewellery Street in the southern part of the city. I found that the skills needed to make these figurines are almost the same as the general art of clay sculpture. The only difference lies in the exquisite and accurate portrayal of each characters' expression and personality. They were all so vibrant and lifelike – with raised hands, stretched out feet, open eyes and lifted eyebrows, just like normal human beings. The more you look at them, the more you like them. Their commonness makes them extraordinary.

Zhang Mingshan, the original craftsman, reportedly began to make clay figures in the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). The tradition has now been going on through four generations over a period of nearly 160 years.

When Zhang Mingshan was young, he was influenced by neighbouring potters and so, began his

1. Zhang's Clay Figurines Shop in Tianjin
2. "Here, a stick of candied hawthorn berries!..."
3. Zhang Hongying, the fifth generation of the Zhang family
4. Working on a Special order

1

1. This steamer at the food stand is made out of real bamboo.
2. Teahouse of the Ming and Qing period
3. An exquisitely crafted one-wheel cart
4. Vibrant and colourful figures

career by making various clay objects like hills, rocks and pen containers, which he sold at the market. He was a great fan of traditional opera and often went to temple fairs, where operas were staged. Fascinated by the characters, each time he hid some clay in his sleeves and, while enjoying the performance, he kneaded the opera figures. Later, he went to the streets to knead figures as well. As his skills matured and advanced, he could produce a figure in a few minutes. By the time he was 18, he had become known far and wide and earned the name for his works – "Zhang's Clay Figurines". He was even invited to Beijing by Empress Dowager Cixi to make clay figurines for the imperial court. His art works can still be seen in the Palace Museum and Summer Palace in Beijing.

Today something new has developed in the art of Zhang's Clay Figurines – a figure of the first Zhang craftsman himself.

Translated by Xiong Zhenru

Tips for the Traveller

Location: Tianjin Zhan's Clay Figurines Special Shop is on Old Culture Street, in front of Tianhou Palace, in Nankai District, Tianjin. The Painted Clay Sculpture Studio (its workshop and the exhibition hall for distinguished clay art works are open to visitors) is at 202 Machang Road in Hexi District.

Price: Costs for general painted clay figurines range from 10 to 2,000 yuan. Personal statues can be ordered if you provide two photos, one face-on and one profile. It takes one to two months, and charges range from 1,000 to 3,000 yuan. A famous-character piece takes one to two months and costs 500 to 3,000 yuan.

Life Is Art

— a Visit to Yabo Tea Garden

Photos and Article by
So Long Chi

1

A cup of green tea, in reality a light yellow colour, radiates delicate fragrance. One swallow leaves your mouth sweet with freshness.

A Tea Garden in Traditional Style

One bright Sunday morning, I decided that a trip to the countryside for traditional-style tea would boost my spirits. So, I took the train to Fanling in the northern area of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, then changed to a mini-bus which went straight to the China International Tea Society at the gate of Yabo Tea Garden.

Green trees filled the tea garden and all around it, more than I'd seen in ages, and the fragrance of the greenery and the soil, rather than the smell of cement, tingled in my nostrils. All the buildings, rooms, tables and chairs are made of wood. On the left of the entrance are the tea trees, and beyond them several huts with thatched roofs and a wood house. In the far distance is an expansion of paddy fields, while on the right are a few small farmer's houses built in the architectural style of the early days of the Republic. In the front of one of the small houses hangs a straw rain cape. The whole atmosphere of the garden imparted visions of traditional Chinese pastoral life. I inquired about the designer and was told that the owner himself, designed it. Although not an architect, Mr. Ye travelled extensively in the country and was imperceptibly influenced by what he had seen everywhere. Eventually, this tea house emerged.

Fresh Vegetables from the Fields to the Table

At lunch time a banquet was held in the expanse of the tea garden. With the burning sun hanging overhead, and sweat sliding down our faces, we ate heartily, grateful for the cool breeze blowing from time to time. What pleased us most was the extreme freshness of all the vegetables we ate. It took only 15 minutes to bring these raw vegetables from the plot to the table. More interestingly, we tasted the famous Zhejiang Dongpo Pork, a dish I had not had for quite some time. Most of the cooks in the tea garden were from Hangzhou and expert in cooking Zhejiang-style food, hence the savoury pork dish which enticed us to eat to full satisfaction.

3

雅博主人
珍藏陳年
東風

Professional Tea-Making Technique

After lunch, when we went to the tea room, we were lucky enough to find Professor Ye was on duty demonstrating the art of tea making. In our imagination, Professor Ye should be an old scholar with white hair and beard, walking with a stick. But though wearing glasses he was in fact a man of around 40 and very amiable and approachable.

He showed us the process of tea making: prepare the water and fire, select tea leaves, pour the water from a great height, steep the tea, and finally sip and enjoy. A vibrant light yellow colour, the tea was fragrant and refreshing. Professor Ye drank his tea in one gulp while it was hot and then sniffed the empty cup three times. I had always thought tea was bitter even though people told me how fragrant and sweet it was. Here in this tea garden, I found the tea was truly sweet and fragrant. Perhaps it was the clear mountain water and the charcoal fire.

1. Experiencing the pleasures of fragrant tea 2. Exhibits in the Tea Art Shop 3. Enjoying a violin performance while drinking tea. 4. Reading room in the style of a pavilion

4

Tea Drinkers — True Tea Connoisseurs

Tea cups in hand, we "connoisseurs" held a lively discussion among ourselves, even though most of us had just met. During the debate, I came to know Huang Yici, a woman who came to lend a helping hand in the tea garden at weekends. A scholar who lived abroad for 17 years, she had developed the hobby of drinking tea. But there her method of making tea was rather cursory and, of course, incorrect: simply tea leaves added to boiling water. After returning to Hong Kong, she decided to learn the art of tea making and luckily met Professor Ye. With such a good teacher to guide her, she became enthused with the art. She started with tea-tasting and later also developed an interest in antiques, learning even more of her Chinese culture.

Originally, Huang had suffered from a gastric ulcer, and on returning to Hong Kong's fast paced life, it became even worse. But strangely, after she became interested in the art of tea making, her situation improved quickly. Probably the leisurely process of enjoying tea calmed her, releasing the tension in her nerves. Even today, she still takes the time to make tea every night before bed. Under Huang's influence, her secretary also developed a strong interest in tea making. After lunch everyday, the two of them took turns making tea, enabling them to some pleasurable leisure in their busy lives.

According to Huang Yici, there was a disadvantage in making tea herself — she then had less opportunity to go to the teahouse and enjoy her tea. Even at the teahouse, she didn't like to drink their Pu're tea; she preferred only Shoumei tea, and sometimes even brought her own tea leaves, fearing poor quality in the teahouse.

Longjing Tea Specialist and Tea Grower

My acquaintance with Jia Hua stemmed from my own mistake. Since he looked like a scholar, I addressed him as "professor", which embarrassed him tremendously. He explained that he was in fact a tea farmer, growing Longjing Tea, and had just arrived in Hong Kong from Hangzhou, the home of Longjing Tea, to discuss with local professors ways to transplant Longjing Tea along the Xiangjiang River. He chatted with the members of the Tea Society and answered various questions. Apart from being a tea specialist, he also was a good cook, specialising in Zhejiang-style dishes. A sickle in hand, he showed people around the tea garden and introduced to them the various vegetables, fruits and plants in a completely professional style. But his main task at the garden, however, was to attend to the crops grown by the weekend "farmers" who came in once every week.

Time flew by and suddenly dusk had arrived. The sunset was unbelievably beautiful in the tea garden. We refilled our cups with tea before we started our return to the city bathed in the evening glow.

Translated by Xiong Zhenru

The Essence of Tea-Making

1. Choose the variety of tea you like.
2. Use the right water: mountain water is the best, followed by river water and well water.
3. Boil the water on charcoal or wood fire.
4. The tea should then be made as follows:
    - a) put tea leaves into a clean pot;
    - b) when the water has just boiled, pour from a height, continuously, and away from the centre of the teapot;
    - c) wipe away the white foam, using the lid; cover the teapot; then shower the outside of the teapot with boiling water to clear excess foam and increase the fragrance;
    - d) when serving tea, the first pot is usually used to rinse and warm the teacups; also each pot of tea should be evenly served to each teacup until the pot is emptied;
    - e) drink the tea hot, and finish the cup in one swallow, while your lips touch the cup, inhale the aroma heartily.

Tips for the Traveller

Location and transport: Yabo Tea Garden is located at No. 32A San Uk Tsuen, Fanling. Take the 56K special green mini-bus at Fanling Railway Station.

Activities: Experiencing the pleasures of drinking tea in an outdoor teahouse, reading books about tea, camping, harvesting fruits, watching performances of Chinese traditional operas, and watch traditional wedding demonstration.

Food: In the garden, there are teahouses offering various kinds of tea, vegetables, and roast meats.

Note: Anyone who wants to visit the tea garden should become a member of the China International Tea Society first. For detailed information, please call: 26744721, or 26592355.

1. The tea garden atmosphere fits well into the countryside. 2. Professor Ye 3. Professor Ye answers a variety of questions. 4. Tea made with mountain water boiled on a charcoal fire is the best.

NEXT ISSUE

Three Tourist Routes Near Beijing

Shan Xiaogang

Looking for Shangri-La

Xie Guanghui

Planning to spend a few days touring scenic spots near ***Beijing****? If so, find out about these three interesting short routes introduced in our next issue. These tourist spots, on either side of the Great Wall, offer you great choices in scenery, local dishes, and general, good fun.*

The name, ***Shangri-La,*** *is renowned throughout the world. But where is the original Shangri-La? We take you to a remote area bordering Tibet and Yunnan where you will find the answer.*

Married to a Handicapped Chinese

Xie Guanghui

In the same issue, you will find an interesting life story: ***An Australian woman married to a handicapped Chinese man****. The couple live their lives happily, like ordinary Chinese, and also manage a hotel business.*

The coming of spring may bring back memories of childhood fun – ***kite flying****. We will take you to Weifang in Shangdong Province to see how kites are made and flown.*

Kite Flying

Shan Xiaogang

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